COMIXSCENE

NO.6 SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 1973 SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

JOHN CARTER LIVES!

A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

COMIXSCENE
SEPT—OCT 1973 No. 6
COMIXSCENE--a bi-monthly newspaper devoted to comic art and all its aspects, is published by Supergraphics/218 North Sixth Street / Reading, Pennsylvania
SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Single issue .75--Year subscription $4.00 Send all subscriptions and correspondence to
COMIXSCENE
Box 445 / Wyomissing, Pa. / 19610
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and the brotherhood of comic artists and writers.

EDITORIAL

With this issue, *COMIXSCENE* wraps up its first year of production!

Over the past twelve months, we think we've given you the latest and most comprehensive reporting on popular media available in a single publication—and backed it up with the most exciting graphics possible.

As we promised in our first issue, we've continually experimented with features and formats, judging their success by the response that followed. With each issue, we've attempted to expand and improve our coverage of the shape of things to come. A look at the past six issues will bear all this out—and make us more determined than ever to continue to top ourselves time after time.

Last issue we said a special report on crime and violence would follow. But while we were putting it together, an event occurred we felt was appropriate enough to postpone our projected feature for an issue. We learned that BALLANTINE BOOKS was preparing to release the complete series of John Carter novels—plus some sensational supplemental material that's as exciting as the books themselves!

Along with the eleven "Mars" novels (each with a beautiful new cover painting), BALLANTINE is releasing an exquisite 24" x 37" full-color poster featuring the cover art to *Thuvia, Maid of Mars* (available for $2.50) and a giant 37" x 52" full-color MARS MURAL—the definitive map of Barsoom showing all the exotic lands of Carter's adventures: Helium, Ptarth, The Valley of the First Born, and more (available for $5.00 at local newsstands). It's a complete package no collector can afford to miss!

By special arrangement, BALLANTINE has given us permission to publish the Mars Mural in our centerspread exclusively for *COMIXSCENE* readers. More on ERB, Ballantine and John Carter throughout this issue!

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS: this will be the final issue for those who subscribed with issue 2. If there's a blue line across your mailing label or a final issue notice, don't wait, RESUBSCRIBE IMMEDIATELY!! We need time to process your sub, so do it now—but ONLY IF YOUR CURRENT SUB HAS EXPIRED—*NOT BEFORE*!!!

Take a look at what we have coming up in *COMIXSCENE* during the next year: THE EVOLUTION OF A COMIC BOOK—a fascinating and revealing feature explaining every detail and process, a textbook on comic production; SPECIAL AIR-WAR ISSUE—the killer skies of WW1 in films, comics, pulps, lavishly illustrated: BIG WESTERN ISSUE—packed with unpublished Steranko art; THE NOSTALGIA CRAZE—giant pictorial feature revealing the fabulous Code-O-Graphs, buttons, premiums, radio serials of yesterday; THE FANTASTIC PULPS—if you liked the pulp chapter in *The History of Comics*, this is for you; BIG PIN-UP GIRL ISSUE—women like you've never seen them before; and a special STERANKO ISSUE—with a sensational new character graphic story in FULL-COLOR. Don't dare miss an issue!!!

Work on *The Encyclopedia of Super Heroes* continues slowly but surely, as *COMIXSCENE* and other projects become more demanding. But we promise to complete it as soon as possible—be patient, we guarantee it'll be worth it.

Those of you who receive comic fan publications have probably seen Joe Brancatelli's syndicated "Inside Comics" feature. Knowing personally all those discussed in the article, "The 10 Most Important Men In Comics," we found it lacking in places clarity, meaning and facts. We felt some of these points should be answered, and imposed upon one of the most knowledgeable men "inside comics" to clear up the discrepancies in question—Marvel Comics editor, ROY THOMAS. His answer follows intact:

Dear Jim:

You've invited me to submit a rebuttal to Joe Brancatelli's first *Inside Comix* column, with its "Ten Most Powerful Men in Comics" nonsense. At first I accepted; then, I was tempted to renege—both because I am basically in favor of the kind of syndicated-column thing which Brancatelli is attempting, and secondly because one hates to give the muddled thought which actually seeped its way there into any additional publicity.

However, after realizing that thousands of fans may read his rambling inanities and take them for Gospel—an "inside view" that "the pros won't dare answer truthfully" and "the way it really is" and all that crap, I thought that I might at least put down on paper a few words to refute the more blatant errors.

No, I'm not terribly offended at not being included, since most of my editorial functions at Marvel were mistakenly given to Sol Brodsky anyway. As a matter of fact, Sol may well belong on the list—but for far different reasons than Joe B. suggests. Rather, because, as Stan's left-hand man, he is in charge of getting good prices, paper, etc., to make some of Stan's plans economically feasible (working in tandem there with comptroller Dick Conway and circulation director John Ryan). But Sol B. is hardly the exact equivalent (or anything like it) of Sol H. at DC, inasmuch as all editorial power which Stan does not keep for himself is given to me, except insofar as I've delegated it out to the likes of art director John Romita, *CRAZY* editor (and b&w associate editor) Marv Wolfman, assistant editor Don McGregor, etc.

Nor will I argue many matters of opinion: Whether Warren's books are really better than Marvel's etc. (Joe B.'s criteria here are *simple*, in *every* sense of the word: he simply makes believe he is a "neo," decides that six out of seven times Warren's covers are more appealing to the eye, and expects that to settle things. His bias against Marvel in the piece is so strong that he manages to run down Marvel not only in the sections on Stan and Sol, but even in the section on Warren! Anyone who accepts INSIDE COMIX 1 as anything resembling objective journalism deserves all the stupidity which he inherits and, unfortunately, promulgates whenever he quotes such trash to others.)

No, I'll deal (after those two paragraphs, anyway) primarily with refuting errors of fact which deal directly with Marvel. If Carmine, Warren, or others want to find other errors, let 'em. There are enough boneheaded comments on Marvel alone to wear out a typewriter ribbon.

Oh, sure, I know—it's Thomas with his ex-fan ego trip again, trying to stomp on "the little guy." Everybody knows he hates fans, has forgotten his humble origins, and probably never intends to refund our money if he finally decides not to publish *Alter Ego*. He wants us to buy him a pen point and all that.

Not so. Contrary to Joe B's ranting, I do indeed applaud the emergence of the so-called "intelligent fan." I merely wish that INSIDE COMIX had been written by one of them.

Now, to those provable or semi-provable errors:

(1) Quote: "Infantino gambled with his comic book line" etc. As proof, Brancatelli cites his killing *GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW*. The fact that there was "nary a cry of objection" (something I doubt anyway, but what the hell) somehow shows that it was a brave move. It wasn't. The book was a money-loser, and it's hard to put prestige in the bank. Infantino's action was a sensible business move, period.

(2) By hiring Jack Kirby, Infantino assured National of at least a half-dozen high sale books, Sorry, Joe, 'taint so—as the recent cancellation of *MR. MIRACLE* and *THE DEMON* (which go to Comic Book Valhalla to join *NEW GODS, FOREVER PEOPLE,* and all the Kirby innovations in *JIMMY OLSEN* as well) ought to prove beyond a reasonable doubt to any that hath eyes. I yield to very, very few in my admiration for Jack Kirby's work, and I wish to God he were still working at Marvel—but what Joe B. writes on this score is the kind of wishful thinking which Carmine indulged in several years ago. Written now, it is embarrassing. Jack Kirby has many successes behind him, perhaps in front of him. He does not need the kind of asinine defense which Brancatelli offers. And as for the later statement by J. B. that Kirby's books were sellers, and were cancelled despite high sales so that Jack could produce even better-sellers—well, if Carmine had truly done such a stupid thing, he should not be rated #1 on the list but be fired by Kinney, instead. But Carmine isn't stupid; he killed monetary losers again, that's all. If the books had been successes, they would have been continued by someone else when Jack moved on to other things, just as was done with many, many Kirby co-creations at DC, Marvel, and elsewhere from the 1940's on. Does anyone out there besides Joe Brancatelli really think that DC would be publishing *WEIRD WAR TALES* instead of *THE NEW GODS* if the latter had made money?

(3) Jim Warren may singlehanded nullify Marvel's b&w line. Well, Joe B., sorry again there old buddy, but (after cutting back because of production problems), Marvel's on the verge of putting out virtually all of its b&w titles, including *CRAZY*, on a bi-monthly schedule and adding two or three besides. Looks like Warren may have to wait till 1975 (or maybe 1984) to "start calling all the shots." He'll live. And survive to read more pungent analyses of his position than J.B.'s.

(4) The idea that Warren could ever possibly have instigated a lawsuit against Marvel over Satana, the evidence being what it was, is pretty ludicrous. But, let that go.

(5) I do not receive copies of *SHAZAM* as soon as the mag hits the stands—at least, not if I don't buy my own copy. Nor have I ever received a copy thru Marvel because of any lawsuit. Sure, there've been discussions back and forth—and *SWAMP THING* (because the "Dark Genesis" story so closely paralled the Man-Thing origin earlier in *SAVAGE TALES* 1) has been discussed as well, and dismissed because there's no similarity besides a lackluster origin tale that wasn't up to Len and Berni's later high standards—but Joe B. is hardly in a position to know much about them if he doesn't even know whether or not our lawyers send me copies of *SHAZAM*. Come to think of it, it's really hard for anyone as outside comics as Joe B. really is to honestly write an inside piece at all. The title belies his own actual potentialities, as it were. An "Inside Report" has to have more accurate info, does it not? Anyway, onward . . .

(6) Curiously, the article on the Top Ten—obviously written many weeks ago now— mentions that Marvel's early b&w comics sold all right but now "seem to be slacking off." At the time he wrote his little fairy tale, this can hardly have

been more than a wishful-thinking exercise—and since then, it can hardly be even that (see my projected plans under #3 above).

(7) Sol does not and never did really "decide on logos, coloring, cover lines, and type-faces and sizes" on the books, "except insofar as I wished to let him. All cover copy was written by Stan and myself (some by Marv on *CRAZY*); Stan and I chose the logos, though Sol could suggest some, in his capacity as production manager of the b&w mags at the time; Stan and I even decide and decided the coloring. Joe B. may loathe the cover-lines Stan and I write; that is his privilege as an American and all that. But please—blame Stan and me, not poor Sol. He's got enough to do now as Administrator of Marvel Comics.

(8) This one's hard to write, because it concerns Kirby again—but because it deals at least in part with Marvel, I can't let it go by. True, Jack Kirby sends "shock waves" thru the industry; he has that kind of respect from his fellow pros. And I've already commented on the statement that when he moves, he takes "a half-dozen fast-selling comic books with him," automatically. What is interesting in Brancatelli's dribblings is his bald-faced statement that, when Kirby left Marvel, his former titles dropped "sharply" in sales! I presume that Joe B. got that little fact from the same place he got most of his others; namely, he made it up out of whole cloth. *THOR*, in fact, remained just where it was—a solid third-best-seller in the Marvel line, both under Neal Adams and later under Buscema. And the *FANTASTIC FOUR* mag, as a matter of fact, sold better under John Romita than it had sold for some months under Jack. Later, under a less enthusiastic John Buscema, it returned to the levels at which it had been selling under Jack. Later, when all print were cut down during industry-wide slumps and such, F.F. and THOR may have been cut like any other titles (besides, Marvel was adding new titles all the time, and that newsstand space has to come from somewhere). However, there was no "sharp drop." In fact, no drop at all in that immediate period.

(9) Various considerations prevent me from going in detail about Jack's announced plans to leave DC and return to Marvel except to say that Jack Kirby is still at DC because he has a contract with them. Period. What the future will bring, on the other hand, anyone can guess. But only Joe Brancatelli would probably dare claim his guesswork is cold, hard fact.

Oh hell . . . I'm just about written out on the subject of Brancatelli's infantile mumblings, I haven't bothered polishing my remarks, perhaps, as much as he did his—mainly because I consider my main contribution to comics at this stage to be what appears in the Marvel comics and b&w magazines, not an answer to an ill-conceived, error-bestrewn parody of what should have been a worthwhile syndicated fan-column. Suffice it to say, Jim, that—if INSIDE COMIX 1 is indicative of the level of information and analysis of which Joe Brancatelli is capable, then the "intelligent fan" he celebrates will have to look elsewhere for sustenance than in the new comic-book column he plans to write for THE MONSTER TIMES. He himself has now joined a list, perhaps, of "The Ten Most Powerful Men in Fandom." I hope he remembers a line from the first Spider-Man story: "With great power there must also come great responsibility."

Cordially, Roy Thomas

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HORROR

No. 3 - Haunting, HORROR COMICS issue, from EC to the Marvel black and whites to the undergrounds, all discussed and dissected in definitive article illustrated with dozens of vintage horror covers. The saga of the horror pulps is told. "Frogs," the wordless, innovative graphic story by Steranko, appears in the centerspread.

DRUGS

No. 4 - DRUGS AND THE COMICS is the theme of this special issue that examines the role of comics and drug usage. The eight-page anti-drug story "The Block," highlights this issue, along with the story on how it was created. Plus more news, articles, features, and another behind-the-scenes editorial by Steranko.

SORCERY

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Before we forget, we recently unearthed a promotional publication on our projected strip, O'RYANN. Only several hundred copies remain of this 16-page book which summarizes the O'Ryann epic and tells how the concept was developed. Graphics include a series of lead-up approaches to the subject, pin-ups of the main characters and the controversial splash page which resulted in Marvel rejecting the strip for publication. *O'RYANN* is outrageously priced at $3.00 plus .25 postage and handling for those of you completists who have dollars to burn.

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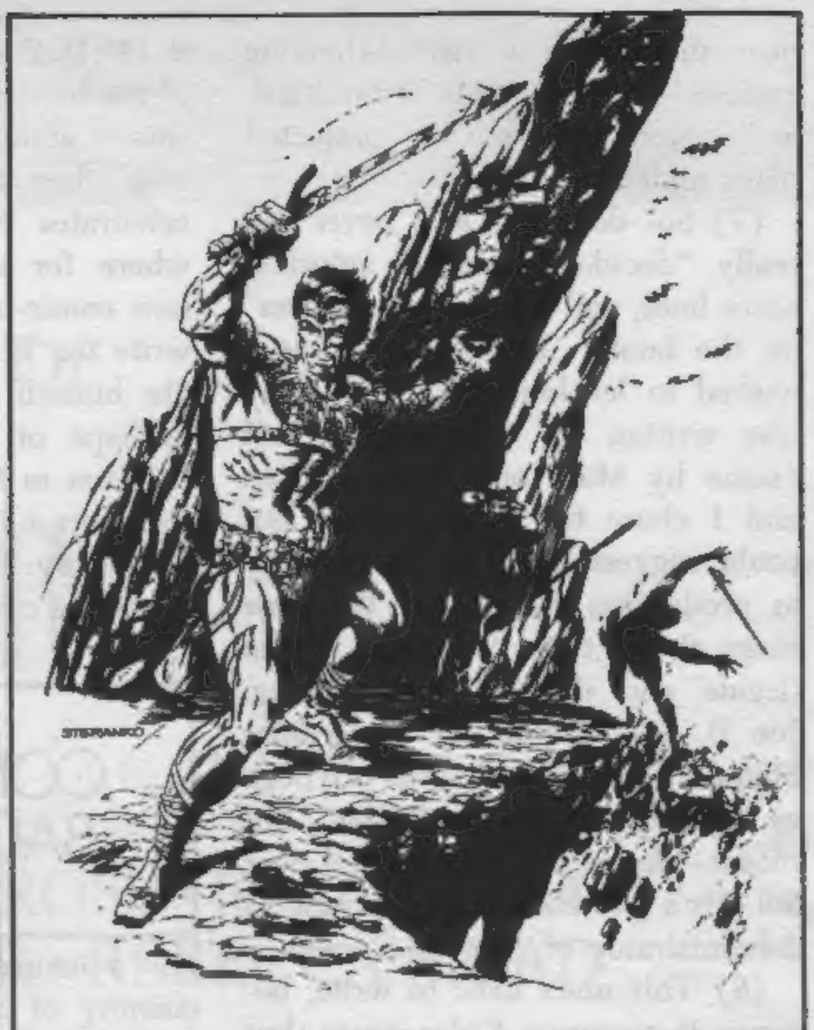

TALON

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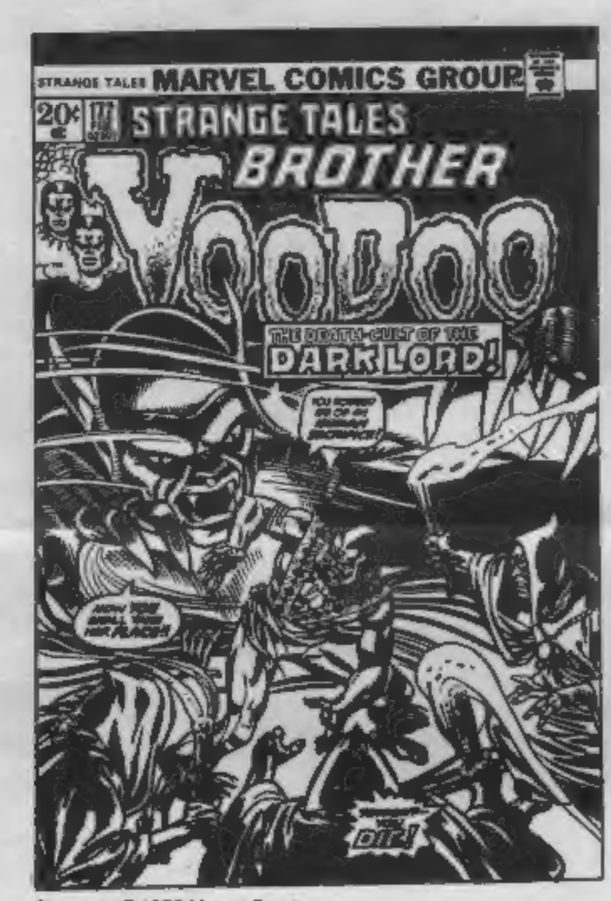
MARVEL NEWS

According to the most recent sales figures, Marvel is now the top-selling comics company in the business. Congratluations are certainly in order for the artists, writers and production people on the Marvel staff, but there is little time for them to celebrate. The ever-changing, ever-expanding Marvel line of comics continues to carry a heavy work-load both here in the States and overseas in Europe, where the Marvel craze is just beginning to peak.

A third weekly magazine is being added to the Great Britain line-up, which has so far featured early reprints of the Hulk, Spiderman, the Avengers and the Fantastic Four. The enthusiasm these Marvel books have generated has encouraged Stan Lee to look towards the rest of Europe as potential Marvel madness territory. Translations into German and other languages have been discussed so far.



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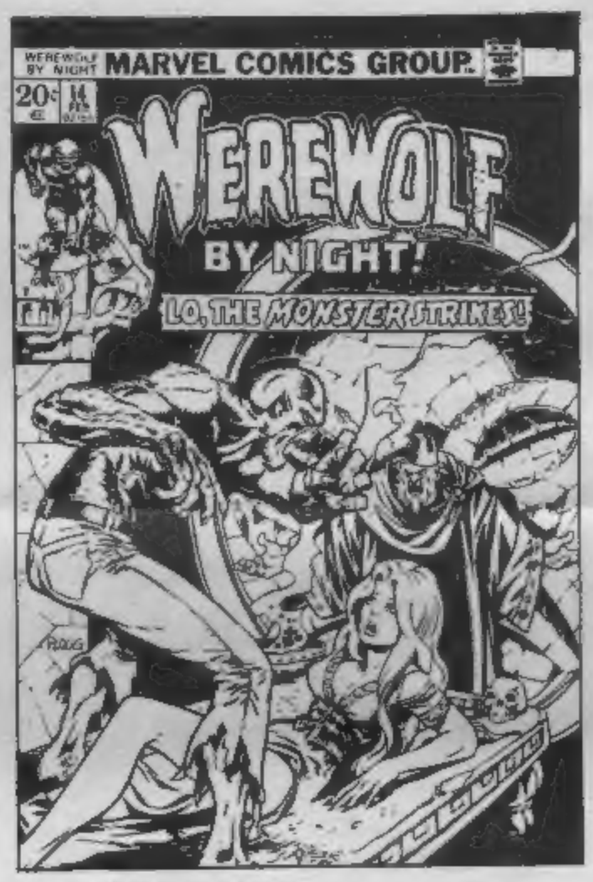
Meanwhile, the fates of the Marvel black and white magazines are being juggled back and forth, in order to find a balance between the sales figures and the work loads. All of the monster over-sized mags were set back to a quarterly schedule for a time, then reinstated as bi-monthlies. *Savage Tales* will once again be placed in limbo after the third issue. There is a possibility however, that it will be again revived, but that would be decided primarily by the sales figures on the second and third issues. There is a lengthy Conan story by Roy Thomas and Neal Adams, previously slated for the fourth issue, which will have to be re-scheduled for the color *Conan* comic, whenever the storyline can be adapted and woven into the current part of the Barbarian's legend.

The brightest star in the Marvel giant books seems to be the humor magazine, *Crazy*. It is now on a seven times a year schedule and is showing every sign of success. The upcoming features in the book include a take-off on the latest James Bond movie, "Live and Let Spy" by Stu Schwartzburg, Roy Thomas, John Buscema and the Crusty Bunkers; "McClown" by Marv Wolfman and Neal Adams; the insane "Moosipatamia" by Bob Foster; and Kelly Freas' "Cockeyed Canvas" parodies of famous paintings, which includes the Dali melting watches piece. Art Buchwald will be featured in a six-page fumetti section, the monster caption books will be satired, and a new section called "Features We'd Be Crazy To Print" will debut.

Steve Skeates will be writing for *Crazy* in the near future, already having finished movie parodies on *High Plains Drifter, Last Tango In Paris* and *Soylent Green*. Steve has also written "1993 Nostalgia Paraphernalia Catalogue," which will be illustrated by Larry Hama and Ralph Reese.

The monster magazines will be carrying some interesting features in the months to come, some of which include a Harlan Ellison-Esteban Maroto collaboration entitled "Bright Eyes," a Dracula story illustrated by Frank Springer, and Don McGregor's "Demon Fire," a story about drug raids against innocent victims.

The line of Marvel color monster comics continues to roll on, with Mike Ploog returning to illustrate



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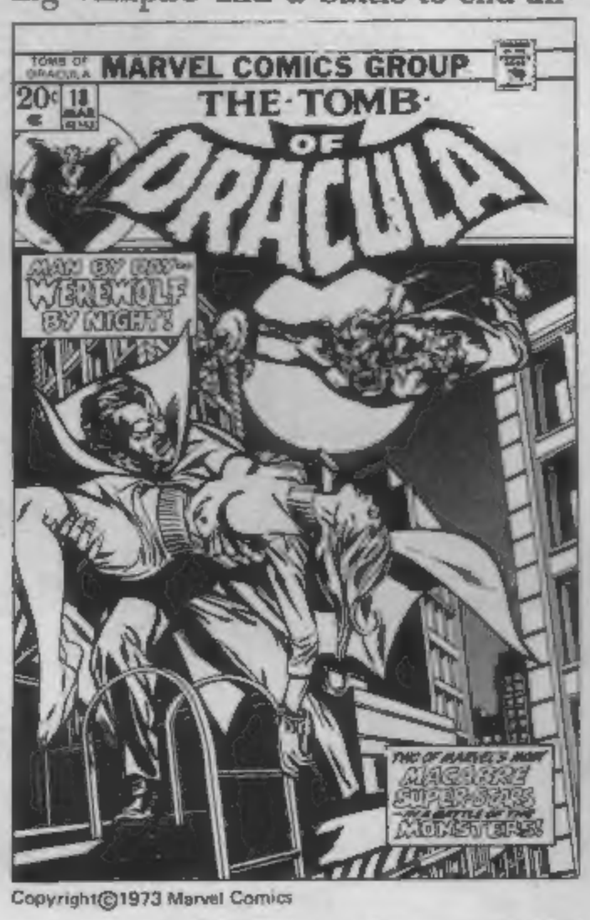
the *Werewolf By Night* book, now written by Marv Wolfman (who else?). In the 13th issue, a mysterious sorcerer named Taboo is in search of the mystic book of sins, "Darkhold," and captures our resident werewolf in order to track it down. It seems that Jack Russell's father had originally stolen the book to prevent the sorcerer from turning his own son into a monster with powers even greater than his own. Our villain is assisted by Topaz, the source behind his power, and when they find that "Darkhold" has previously been destroyed, everything breaks loose—and all in the direction of the Werewolf. The next issue resolves the battle and Jack Russell discovers some interesting facts about his past and his real father. The final sequence in the book finds Jack off to visit the ancestral home of his father.

Dracula gets involved in one of the weirdest team-ups of the year, when in issue 16, he wanders the streets of London with a skeleton. The bizarre and moody story begins when the skeleton's grave is disturbed by a wealthy dying man. In *Dracula* 17, one of the vampire's strangest adventures begins with a trip to Transylvania in order to gain a fresh supply of his native soil, necessary to allow him to rest in peace while the sun is shining. During the visit, he manages to 'kill' Blade and encounters an odd couple carrying a strange-looking box on the Eurorail Express. There is even a sneaky cameo by Jack Russell, which blooms into a two-part adventure in Transylvania with the hairy kid himself. Later, Dracula manages to get lost in the Transylvania Alps, caught in a blizzard with Rachel van Helsing for two issues.

As sort of a breather, the Count makes an appearance in *The Frankenstein Monster* 8 and 9, wherein the monster encounters the sleeping vampire and a battle-to-end-all-


TOMB OF DRACULA
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE TOMB OF DRACULA
MAN BY DAY... WEREWOLF BY NIGHT!
TWO OF MARVEL'S MOST MACABRE SUPER-STARS IN A BATTLE OF THE MONSTERS!

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battles begins. An interesting turn of events takes place in the story, written by Gary Friedrich and drawn by John Buscema and John Verporten, when the monster loses his ability to speak and can only utter animal-like grunts.

Man-Thing will be given his own book after a successful run in *Fear*. The first issue concludes a story initiated in *Fear* 18, "1, 2, 3, 4—It All Falls Down," when Man-Thing, Jennifer and DaKimh journey to the green fields of Therea to fight for the Palace of the Gods. Nether-Spawn will also make a return appearance in this issue. *Man-Thing* 2 will feature a story called "Nowhere to Go But Down," in which a lifelong loser plays a dominant role and a female refugee from a motorcycle gang flips over *Man-Thing* (?). Steve Gerber and Val Mayerik continue to script and illustrate the book, in their usual off-beat manner.

Fear 20 will re-introduce Morbius, under the capable hands of Mike Friedrich and Paul Gulacy, and we find the scientifically-created vampire being sent on a secret mission by Demon-Priest.

In the second issue of *Son of Fu-Manchu* Shang gets his costume and faces his first outside threat, plus having to deal with Nayland Smith's revenge. The book will be a synthesis of the atmospheric eeriness of the Fu-Manchu settings and the more contemporary success of the popular Martial Arts films. Starlin will do the pencils on the book for the first few issues, then do layouts to enable him to spend more time on his favorite book, *Captain Marvel*.

John Buscema is going back to doing full pencils of the *Conan* book, rather than the layouts and partial pencils he has been forced to do because of his busy schedule. The current adventures of the Cimmerian, in what is similar to medieval China, will come to an end in issue 34, and Conan will find himself in a desert setting, facing the "Fire of Ashurbanipal." Afterward, Neal Adam's

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"Curse of the Golden Skull" will be featured, followed by the Buscema pencilled and inked "House of Arabu."

All decked out with a new title, new writer and new illustrator, *Kull the Destroyer* must fight to help his loyal friend, Brule the Spear Slayer, against that old foe, Thulsa Doom in issue 12. Steve Englehart and Mike Ploog pick up on the writing and drawing of the now-dethroned Kull. Those mainstays of the Marvel line, the super-heroes, continue to plung into new and interesting situations. Dr. Doom returns for a three-parter in *Fantastic Four*, his first appearance in several years. This time he attempts to control the FF by using a powerful Vibrobomb, but is foiled when Darkoth comes on the scene. Future plans for the fighting quartet include the resolution of the Richards' marital difficulties and a story in which the Sub-Mariner becomes an important factor in the future of the FF.

Spider-Man comes face-to-face with the Punisher, patterned after the one-man mafia-busting heroes of the paperbacks nowadays. (The Destroyer, The Enforcer, etc.). He goes after Spider-Man, thinking he is after

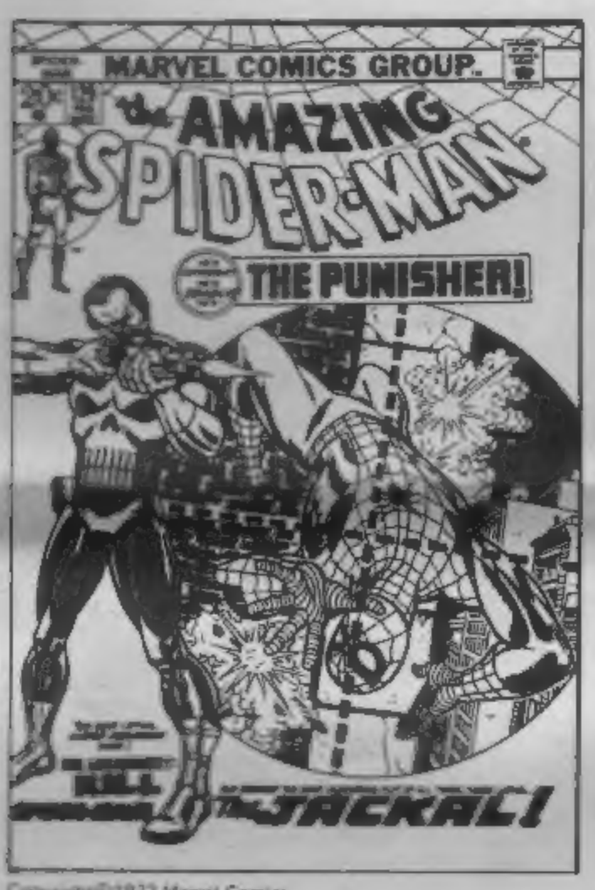
a public menace, aided and abetted by The Jackal.

Thor 220 will conclude the Black Star series, with an all-out battle between Kragonn and Dracus, the two rulers of the planet Rhun. There will be a rather startling ending, after which Thor returns to a two or three-part mix up with Hercules.

The Savage Sub-Mariner returns to Atlantis to find his people suffering from the effects of a powerful nerve-gas frozen in suspended animation. New writer Marv Wolfman then sends Subby on a long search to find a cure, bitter and angry at mankind once again.

Thor will guest in the conclusion of the Dr. Spectrum stories in *Iron Man* 66, in which Eddie March must become a substitute for Iron Man during a good part of the battle. As if he didn't have enough problems, Tony Stark then discovers he is developing new heart trouble.

The annual Rutland Halloween Parade issue of *The Avengers* 119 will feature the Collector, who unleashes many of his prized "collection pieces" to attempt to defeat the star-studded group of heroes. In the



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hassle, Loki becomes involved and goes mad. Everyone leaves the scene and Tom Fagan is left caring for the crazed Asgardian—as if Tom Fagan did not have enough problems already . . !

In the following *Avengers* tale, the Zodiac appears and carries with him a machine that is designed to kill everyone born under a given astrological sign. This is scheduled to run several issues, so you believers can speculate as to the final outcome of this donnybrook.

Daredevil finally winds up his battle with Terrex in the September release of his comic book, while Angar begins to reveal the better side of himself to the readers.

Mike Friedrich takes over the writing chores on *Captain America* beginning on issue 169, but Steve Englehart has plotted several stories which will be used along with Friedrich scripting. A rather unusual situation develops when Captain America is put in jail and charged with murder, after a terrific free-for-all in the September issue. He finds himself deserted in his time of need by the Falcon, who flies to Wakanda to meet with the Black Panther in hopes of gaining super powers.

Ka-Zar will be getting his own book also, and in the first issue, Mike Friedrich relates the origin of the Savage Land and its strange people, customs and sacrifices, in which Ka-Zar manages to become entangled. Paul Reinman and Mike Royer will be handling the artwork on this book.

Mordo and Dr. Strange journey into the past to find Cagliostro the ancient wizard in *Marvel Premiere* 13, which is the second of three parts in a series. It turns out that Cagliostro is actually a scientist from the future on his way back in time to view the creation of heaven and earth, thus establishing himself as God. Englehart and Frank Brunner continue on the script and art.

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FANTASTIC FOUR
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THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
FANTASTIC FOUR
WHEN STRIKES THE SINISTER SEEKER!
THIS IS IT!! THE FINAL SHOWDOWN WITH DR. DOOM!
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The first issue of *Marvel Two-In-One* will team-up bulk and goop, as the Thing encounters Man-Thing, apparently to battle it out over copyrights to their name-in-common. Gerber and Gil Kane have them slushing it up until Molecule Man arrives on the scene and attacks them both. The title to this story is, appropriately enough, "Strange Things Are Happening."

Roy Thomas again takes over the writing on the *Hulk* book, and brings back some of the great villains of the past. One of the first stories will star the Abomination, Rhino and the Juggernaut—as they battle Hulk for the heavyweight championship of comics. Cobalt Man returns in a subsequent issue in a new costume. Roy plans to place the Hulk in the land of the Inhumans as a sequel to the book length story which appeared some years ago in the *Hulk Annual* 1.

This appears to be "Old Villains" month at Marvel, as in *The Defenders* 12, Xemnu (the original Hulk) returns to Earth and attempts to repopulate his planet in a story called "The Titan Strikes Back." In issues 13 and 14, writer Len Wein will pit the Defenders against the Squadron Sinister. In the story, Hyperion sells the planet Earth (for a pretty good price, we might add) to some character named Nebulon.

Len will also be scripting *Luke Cage—Powerman*, making a few changes in the book as well. Cage will attempt to clear his prison rap and a new girl character will enter the strip. In between all this, Cage will battle with a villain called Steeplejack and a new nemesis named Cottonmouth.

Marvel Team-Up will have a few surprises for those who follow that book. First of all, issue 18 will not feature Spider-Man, but rather the Human Torch and the Hulk will share the spotlight as sort of a reader awareness test issue. Spider-Man returns in 19 with a Ka-Zar guest-star adventure in the Savage Land, illus-

POWER-MAN
MARVEL COMICS GROUP.
LUKE CAGE, POWER MAN
THE FIRST AND STILL THE FREEDOM'S BLACK SUPERHERO ORIGIN!
LOOK OUT! HERE HE COMES—AND BULLETS WON'T STOP HIM!
THE ARMORED MIGHT OF IRON MAN!
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trated by Gil Kane. Gil is quite enthusiastic about 'lost worlds' stories and is populating the strip with scores of lizards and dinosaurs, besides Stegron the Dinosaur Man!

In future issues of *Team-Up*, author Wein wants to feature such Marvel heroes as Hawkeye, Thor, Brother Voodoo, Son of Satan and Shang-Chi, Master of Kung-Fu.

Killraven and his band of Freemen continue to clash with the Martians in the War of the Worlds series in *Amazing Adventures*. In issue 22, writer Don McGregor has the group travel to Washington D.C., when they come across a weird assortment of characters like Sabre, Mint Julip and a band of mutants. Issue 23 takes place under the White House as Killraven is captured and forced to live in the rat-infested catacombs underneath the former Presidential mansion. The final goal of the Martians is the execution of Killraven.

"Malice By Crimson Moonlight" is the catchy title in *Jungle Action* 8, in which the Black Panther must undergo a ritual to become chief of all the Wakandas. Malice, a villainess, attempts to disrupt the ceremonies and free Venom from Central Wakanda. Gil Kane takes over the art chores on issue 9, which introduces the fascinating Baron Macabre, a black skeletal figure who is the Spectral Ambassador to the Dark Beyond—a land presided over by King Cadaver.

The Cosmic Cube will become an important part of the Jim Starlin directed *Captain Marvel* book. Jim is attempting to develop the character of Captain Marvel, and to add romantic interest he has added Moon Dragon from the *Daredevil* strip. There will be a battle between the Marvel, Thanos, Iron Man and the Destroyer which will be resolved in an upcoming issue of the *Avengers*. Starlin is slated to illustrate. With issue 32, Steve Englehart will take over the scripting chores and begin to interpret the adventures of the famed Kree warrior in a new way. If you noticed the Death character lurking in the background in recent issues of *Captain Marvel*, keep a sharp eye out for him to be appearing in a special feature in one of the large Marvel black and white monster magazines.

Rising costs and the critical paper shortage of the last few months are

THOR
MARVEL COMICS GROUP.
THE MIGHTY THOR
FOR MY UNIVERSE TO LIVE—
THE GOD OF THUNDER MUST DIE!
AVALON THE KEEPER OF THE INNER COSMOS!
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taking their toll on the marginal-profit comics industry. The first of the many effects of the situation has resulted in the adoption by Marvel of a new system by which a penciller will turn in 18 pages of artwork but 19 pages will be printed. This rather unorthodox measure is intended to be utilized in the form of double-page spreads by turning a regular comic page on its side and reproducing the artwork at almost same size. Further ramifications of the paper shortage will more than likely result in the demise of the 20 cent, 32 page comic in favor of a higher priced book with more pages.

Keep watching Marvel in the upcoming year for a number of surprises in the form of movie adaptations. A number of popular films are already being negotiated for and several "cover" books are being planned to follow the trends and crazes that periodically sweep the nation.

Meanwhile, be on the lookout for a super-secret Roy Thomas, Gil Kane collaboration that will chop you right out of your seats. Be assured that *Comixscene* will keep you informed of the latest developments as they happen.

UNDER THE MOONS OF MARS OR, PLAY IT AGAIN, THARK!

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EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
THUVIA, MAID OF MARS

JOHN CARTER LIVES!

"I opened my eyes upon a strange and weird landscape. I knew that I was on Mars; not once did I question either my sanity or my wakefulness. I was not asleep, no need for pinching here; my inner consciousness told me as plainly that I was upon Mars as your conscious mind tells you that you are upon Earth. You do not question the fact; neither did I.

"I found myself lying prone upon a bed of yellowish, moss-like vegetation which stretched around me in all directions for interminable miles. I seemed to be lying in a deep, circular basin, along the outer verge of which I could distinguish the irregularities of low hills.

"It was midday, the sun was shining full upon me and the heat of it was rather intense upon my naked body, yet no greater than would have been true under similar conditions on an Arizona desert. Here and there were slight outcroppings of quartz-bearing rock which glistened in the sunlight . . . "

For the first time, John Carter and countless legions of science fictions and fantasy readers caught their first glimpse of the unworldly spectacles awaiting them on Mars, thanks to the fertile mind of Edgar Rice Burroughs. This month, celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Mars saga original publication, Ballantine Books is releasing the series as a spectacular new package.

Perhaps the most famous single fictional character in the world of literature is Burrough's Tarzan of the Apes. Yet it is little known that Tarzan was *not* Burrough's first character, nor his first published work. That honor belongs to John Carter, who debuted in *All-Story Magazine* in February 1912 with the title, "Under the Moons of Mars."

The story is told by Carter himself, after a short introduction by one E. R. Burroughs who gives us background information on Captain John Carter, including a description of his mysterious disappearance and return with the manuscript at hand.

In the actual story, Carter tells us how, following his service in the American Civil War, he, along with his partner, Powell, had gone prospecting in Arizona. There, set upon by Indians, Powell is captured and killed. Carter, on recovering his friend's body, is seen by the Indians and forced to flee to a cave in the nearby cliffs where a great weariness overtakes him and he goes to sleep on the rocky floor. Wakening, he climbs to his feet and is amazed to look down upon his own body, lying seemingly dead. Puzzled, he walks outside and looks into the sky at the planet Mars. Carter suddenly yearns to be there. With a jarring wrench, and a moment of dense blackness, Carter finds himself in a strange landscape. He is on Mars.

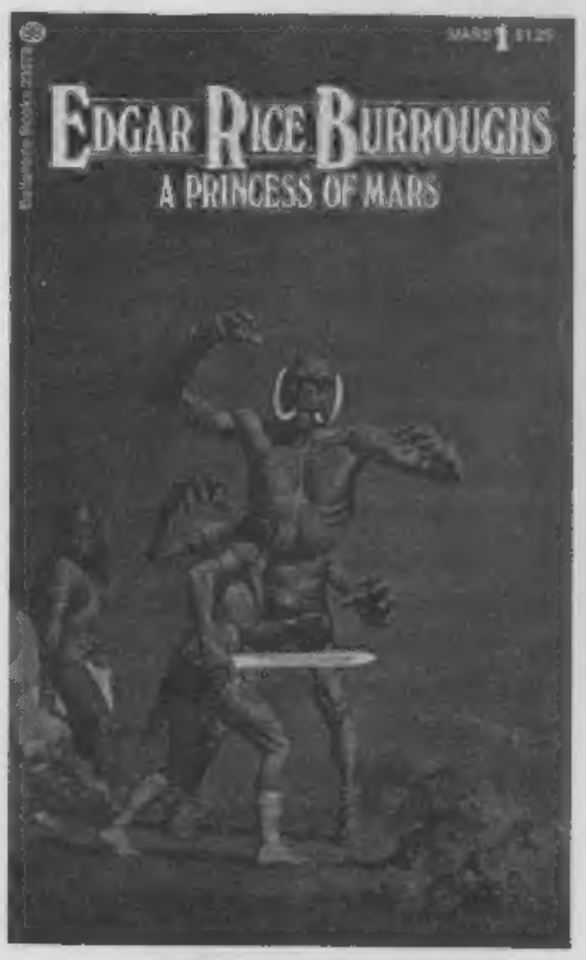
Exploring the alien terrain, he discovers a building, filled with eggs and gets his first look at a Martian. He is attacked by a Thark, a ten-foot-tall green monster with four arms, each holding a weapon. The Thark is astride a Thoat, a massive six-legged beast, as ferocious as its master.

Carter, attempting to leap away from the Thark's lance, finds himself virtually flying through the air. He realizes that on Mars, his earthly muscles have the equivalent of superhuman strength. Carter counter-attacks and easily defeats his foe, discovering, from others which appear, that under Thark law this entitles him to the rank and belongings of the one he has slain.

Carter is taken by the Tharks to their camp, a ruined city, where he gets his first look at Mars' higher race, the red-men (or in this case, woman). For the first time, he sees Dejah Thoris, Princess of Helium and "the most beautiful woman on two worlds." Finding that she is to be executed, Carter rescues her, is recaptured, fights for her in the arena, and escapes to rescue her again. In the process, he manages to kill the leader of the Tharks, and win the undying friendship of Tars Tarkas, the Thark's new leader.

Following some further adventures among Mars' red people, John Carter and Dejah Thoris return to her home in Helium, there they are married. She soon gives birth to an egg destined to become their son (martians are oviparous).

With Carter's happiness nearly assured, tragedy strikes. One of the atmosphere-producing factories, necessary for the preservation of life on Mars has broken down, and all life on the planet will cease unless it is restored. Carter races to the rescue. With death almost upon him, he gains entrance to the plant, makes the necessary repairs and loses consciousness. Awakening, he finds himself back in the cave in Arizona. He returns to his home in Virginia, now



rich (for the cave is full of silver), tells his strange story to his nephew and retreats into a hermit's life, living alone, yearning always to return to Mars. As a final precaution he builds a tomb that can be opened only from the inside, and leaves orders for his body to be placed there, unembalmed, when he dies. Here the first book ends.

"Under the Moons of Mars" was fantastically successful in *All-Story* and readers clamored for a sequel. Burroughs, always prolific, was only too glad to accomodate them with another ten books' worth of material, set on Mars.

The Gods of Mars recounts the extraordinary chronicle in which John Carter returns to the Red Planet in search of his beloved Dejah Thoris. He lands in the Valley Dor, with its vicious plantmen, and discovers the Lost Sea of Korus, guarded by the great white apes and the horrifying lions of Barsoom. Here, too, he finds Thuvia, captive of the Holy Therns, high priests who eat only human flesh slain by their plantmen. And this is only the beginning of a fantastic series of adventures and further encounters with incredible creatures that take place before, under the double moons of Mars, John Carter fights his way back to his people—as Prince of the House of Tardosmars.

The Warlord of Mars relates the adventures of John Carter as he battles to win the secret of the prison cell in the Temple of the Sun—the cell that holds his beloved wife, Dejah Thoris, the Martian maid Thuvia, and the vicious and vindictive daughter of the High Priest of Issus. We meet again the faithful Woola, mighty Tars Tarkas, John Carter's son Carthoris, and many a new friend and enemy from the crimson plains of the Valley Dor to the frozen wastes of the far North, inhabited by the apt, through the dread Carrion Caves to the land of the yellow men with their bestial jeddak, Salensus Oll.

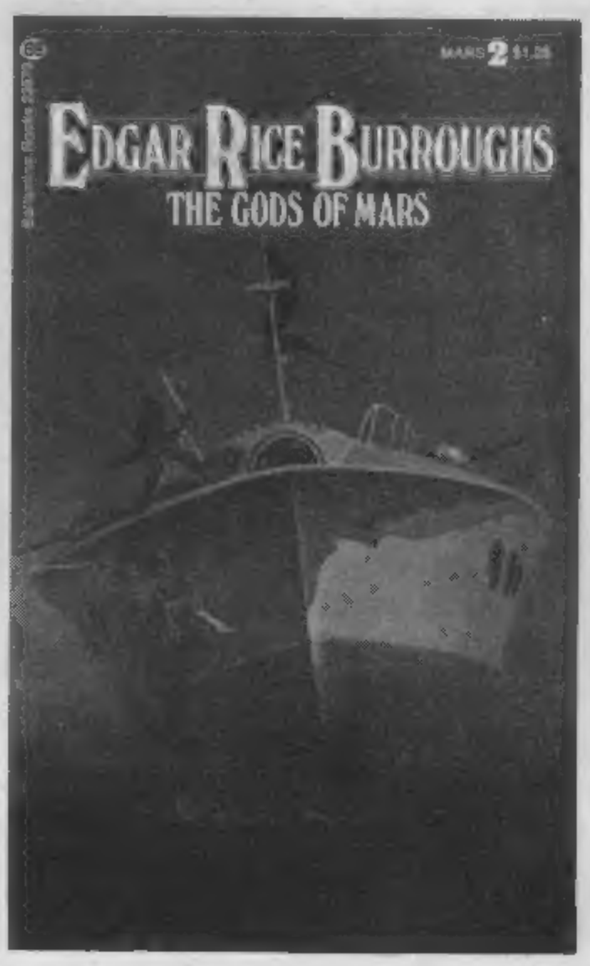
After the third novel, John Carter retreats to the background leaving most of the action to his son, Carthoris, and a young officer of Helium who is in love with his daughter. Of course John Carter himself is always available as a handy deus ex machina, and often appears in this capacity.

In *Thuvia, Maid of Mars,* Carthoris, son of Dejah Thoris and John Carter, is accused of having abducted Thuvia, the glorious daughter of Thuvan Dihn, Jeddak of Ptarth. This could cause war between Ptarth and

Helium. In an effort to prove his innocence, and because he is in fact devoted to her, Carthoris sets out to find and rescue Thuvia. He is in time to save her from the hideous green men of Mars who have stolen the princess from her abductors, but both Thuvia and Carthoris fall into the hands of the mad Tario, Jeddak of Lothar. And he proposes to sacrifice both to Komal—god of the Lotharians—an enormous man-eating lion, the savage banth of Barsoom.

Erb's fifth novel, *The Chessmen of Mars* had Tara of Helium, the Warlord's beautiful and spirited daughter, carried away by the vast winds of a violent Martian storm. Tara brings her small one-man flyer down safely enough—but she is stranded in a strange part of Barsoom, where magnificent rykors—headless bodies—work like cattle at the mercy of their pitiless masters, the kaldanes—creatures which are all head and no body. In trying to escape from the kaldanes, Tara is captured by the city of Manator where she becomes the prize in the Martian game of chess, jetan—played with living pieces—and played to the death!

The series continued with *A Fighting Man of Mars*, in which Hadron of Hastor, Padwar in the service of the Warlord of Mars, goes alone in search of the beautiful Sanoma Tora when she is abducted by Tul Axtar of Jahar. But before Hadron manages to reach Jahar he is deflected from his purpose in an effort to rescue a slave girl of his own race from the ferocious green men of Mars. Tavia, for that is the lovely girl's name, leads Hadron to her home city Tjanath from which she had been stolen as a very small girl. Instead of receiving a warm welcome, both are immediately imprisoned. Hadron learns from a fellow prisoner in the pits that the Tjanathians must have mistaken him for a Jaharian spy and that all Tjanath is deathly afraid of Tul Axtar of Jahar for he has been breeding his race for 200 years to make a warrior army large enough to conquer all Barsoom. Moreover, Tul Axtar has a new weapon which will disintegrate metal. And Hadron already knows that a huge fleet of airships from Helium, headed by John Carter himself, will by now be on its way to assassins' guild. There he encounters the brilliant and evil inventor Fal Sivas, who has created a ship which for the first time will take Barsoomians off their planet to visit the moons of Mars. And there John Carter learns that the head of the assassins' guild has captured the incomparable Dejah Thoris.



remnants of a maritime race which had existed hundreds of thousands of years before—men and women gorgeously apparelled, maintained in suspended animation, unaware that the five beautiful seas of Mars on which they used to sail are now dried up, that indeed, their whole way of life has long since disappeared from the face of the dying planet. In the dark pits too is Llana of Gathol, exquisite daughter of Tara of Helium, held prisoner by the loathesome madman who runs the pits. It is many moons and many countries before Pan Dan Chee and Carter are able to bring Llana safely home to Gathol.

John Carter of Mars, Ballantine's new addition to the Mars epic features Carter in a pair of novelettes recounting his conflict with the awesome "Giant of Mars" who lives in a ruined wasteland and that was once teeming with civilization. Gathering all his wits about him, and utilizing tremendous strength and courage, Carter manages to defeat his adversary. No sooner has he returned from battle than he again takes to the spaceways and finds himself facing "The Skeleton Men of Jupiter" in a tale of bizarre wonder and breathtaking action.

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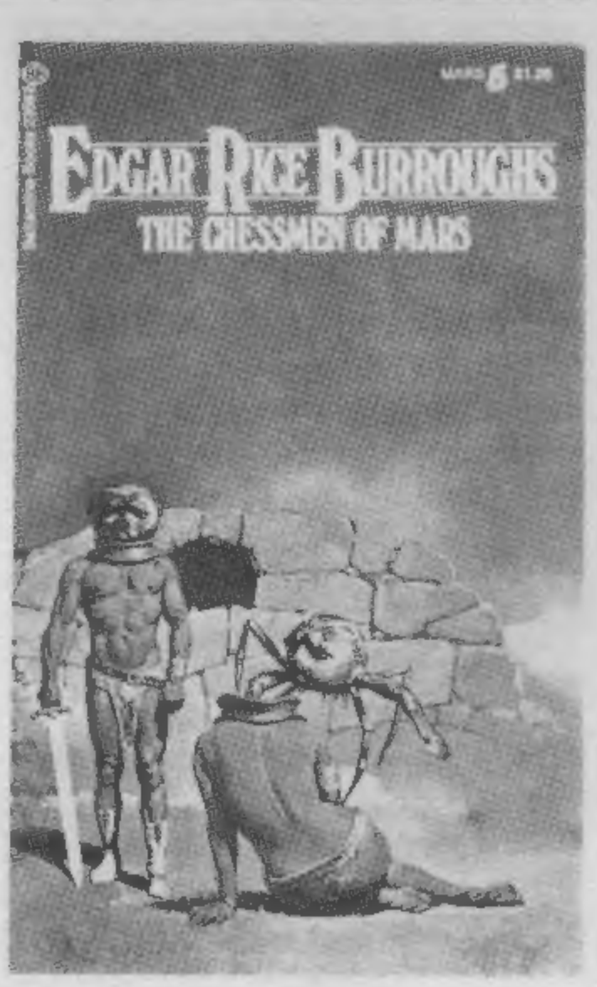
A FIGHTING MAN OF MARS

In *The Master Mind of Mars*, Ulysses Paxton (late of the U. S. Army and long an admirer of John Carter) finds himself in the hands of that extraordinary scientist-surgeon Ras Thavas of Barsoom. Renamed Vad Varo, the former U. S. Army Captain is trained by Ras Thavas as an assistant in the "transfer of life" operations for which the master mind is famous. Vad Varo witnesses one such transfer—the wicked old mind of Xaxa, Jeddara of Phundahl, into the young and lovely body of a nameless victim, while the mind of victim number 4296-E-2631-H is now housed in the body of an ancient crone. When Vad Varo brings 4296-E-2631-H to life he discovers she is Valla Dia and falls in love with the spirit and mind of the girl prisoned in the 1000-year-old body that had been Xaxa's. Incredible dangers and adventures follow as Vad Varo, determined to restore Valla Dia to her proper form, battles his way through weird countries and savage peoples—until at last he meets with John Carter, Warlord of Mars, and brings Valla Dia safely to her home in Duhor.



Jahar in support of his search for Sanoma Tora—a fleet that is doomed to destruction!

The following novel *Swords of Mars*, had John Carter, determined to stamp out the practice of assassination on Mars, going to the city which is the headquarters of the

In *Synthetic Men of Mars*, John Carter sets out with his trusted officer, Vor Daj, to find Ras Thavas, the only man on the planet who may be able to heal the broken body of Carter's beloved wife, Dejah Thoris. Forced landings on perilous terrain, attacks by hideously malformed soldiers invulnerable to sword-thrusts, the capture of Vor Daj and John Carter, their mysterious transfer to a hidden city on the backs of great birds—these are only a sampling of the hazards the intrepid couple undergo before they finally find Ras Thavas—only to discover that he is trapped by a horror he has himself created—living, spreading, growing, indestructible tissue which threatens to engulf the hidden city and eventually the planet.

Llana of Gathol, the next of the series has John Carter captured by the inhabitants of Horz, one of the supposedly "dead" cities of Mars. Together with Pan Dan Chee, his captor, who has also been sentenced to death for bringing Carter into Horz, he is sent down to the pits under the city. To the astonishment of the two men, they discover the

There has been a great deal of controversy about the literary antecedants of John Carter. Richard Lupoff, in his book, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure*, advances the most plausible theory. He feels that Burroughs was influenced by the two novels of an earlier author, Edwin Arnold, *Lt. Gullivar Jones on Mars* and *Phra the Phoenician.*

Gulliver Jones, as comic fans know, is a young American officer who, through mishap, finds himself on Mars—a Mars inhabited by barbaric, red-skinned savages and a graceful, civilized, yellow race. Jones almost immediately falls in love with the princess of the yellow people and spends the remainder of the book keeping her, and himself, out of danger.

Phra is a sailor, who, in a dream-like state, and out of his physical body, finds himself on many strange planets. The two tales combined apparently became the synthesis of the John Carter formula.

Just as the adventures of John Carter are derivative of other sources, so too has his saga influenced the works of others. The primary example of Burroughs' work being utilized by different creators may be found in the Flash Gordon newspaper strip by Alex Raymond.

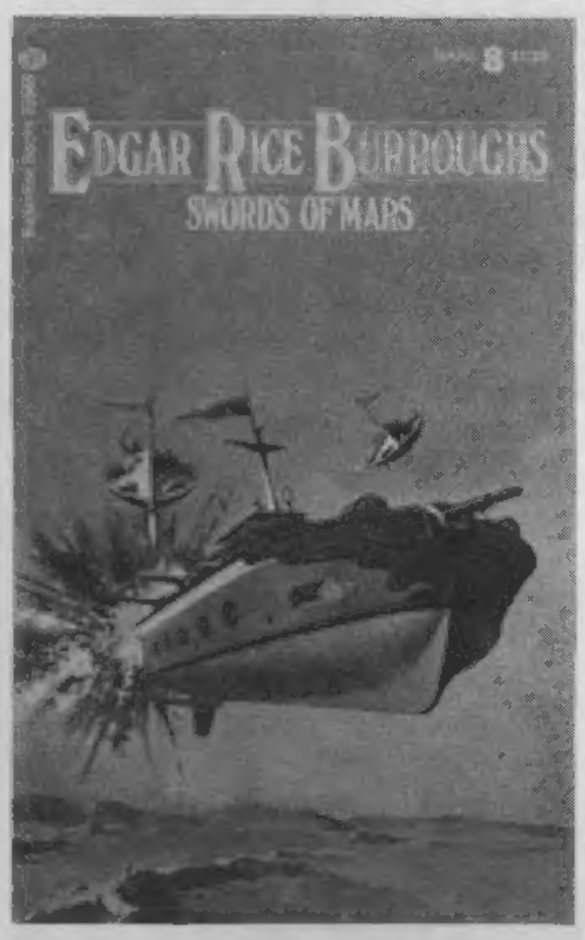
Raymond transported his Earth-originated hero to a planet stricken with the seeds of corruption, barbarity and civil war. The technologists of Mongo and Barsoom were both able to devise ray pistols and flying ships, yet the heroes and villians always fought their duels to the death with swords during hand to hand combat. Dejah Thoris and Dale Arden are striking parallels, as are the overriding concepts of honor, fair-play and relentless determination that are prevelant in both adventures. Just as Burroughs populated his world with multi-colored people and animal-like mutants, so too did Raymond.

Raymond eventually allowed Mongo to evolve into a world of advanced sciences with a highly Germanic-Prussian form of society, yet the early adventures of Flash on Mongo could just as easily have taken place on Barsoom.

The publishing history of the Mars books is a somewhat disjointed one. After the initial magazine publication of "Under the Moons of Mars," Burroughs, who had wisely retained the hardcover book rights to the novels, authorized publication to the McClurg Co., who also handled first editions of most of the other Burroughs books until the formation of Burroughs' own publishing company in the late thirties. Covers for the McClurg editions were done by J. Allen St. John, the artist who achieved great fame for his Burroughs illustrations. The editions published by the Burroughs company, were generally illustrated by ERB'S son, John Coleman .

After the McClurg originals, a cheaper edition was generally released by A. L. Burt. These editions, generally with the same covers as the originals (often even to the publishing logo) served the same function as the book clubs do today.

The evolutionary transition of the John Carter novels from hardback to paperback was a long one, a span of approximately 20 years in which Burroughs material of any kind was simply not in print. Finally, in 1962, Ian Ballantine expressed an interest in the John Carter series but received no replies to his inquiries from Burroughs Inc. After a number of fruitless attempts to contact the Burroughs estate, Ballantine called upon the California based company personally and came back to New York with the authorization to issue the complete John Carter saga and the Tarzan series as well.



The first four of the Ballantine Books authorized editions hit the stands in 1963 and the next four of the same series appeared within a short time, the only problem being that they were published by Ace Books, not Ballantine.

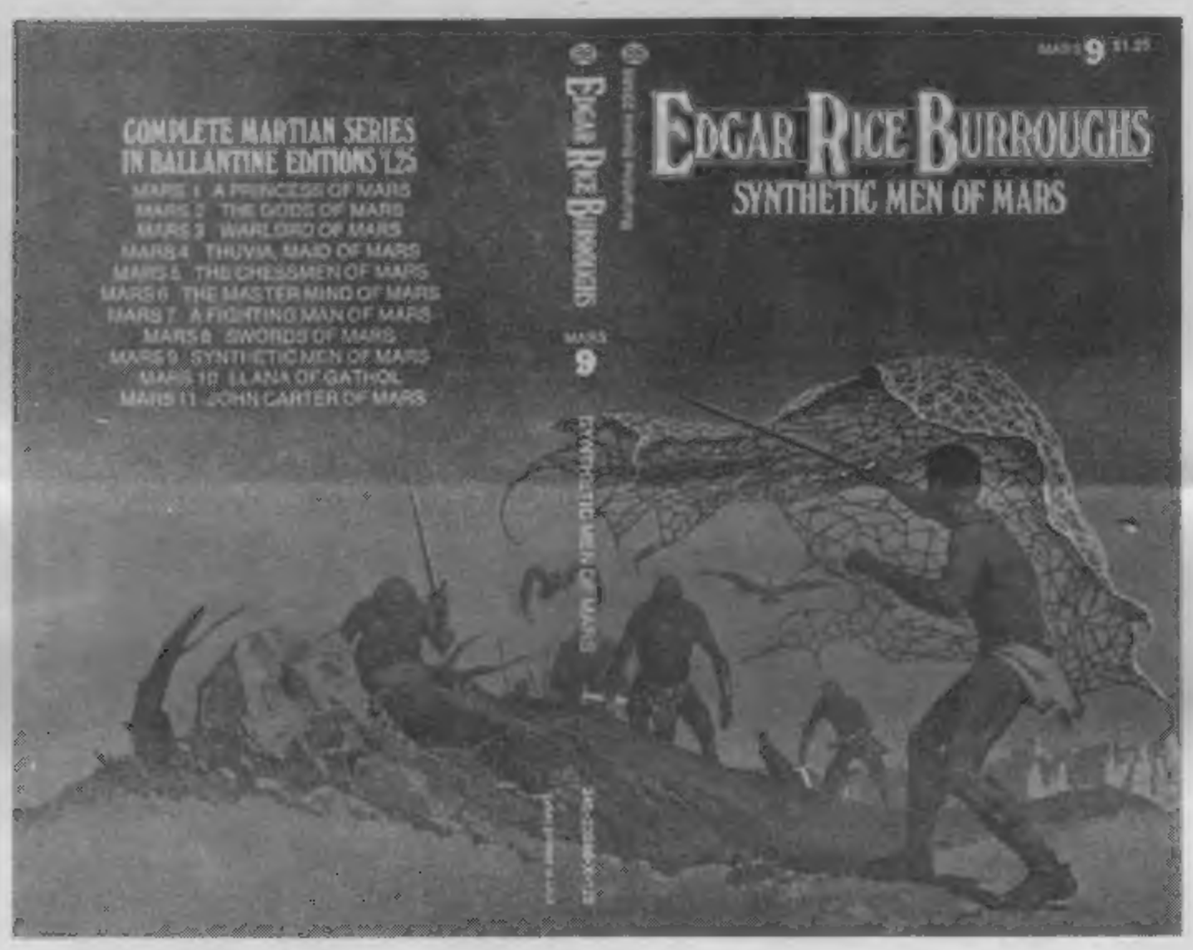
It seemed that in the many years that had passed since the first publication of the Martian novels, the matter of copyrights had arisen and Ace, thinking the series was in public domain, had released a flurry of Burroughs titles in a manner which was copied by Canaveral Press.

In 1965, Ballantine and Ace reached an agreement concerning the Burroughs material to the extent that Ballantine became the authorized publisher of the John Carter, Tarzan and Apache western series, and Ace would handle the rest of the material, which included the Pellucidar and Venus books.

Ballantine eventually completed the Mars series of eleven books and the response from the readers was immediate and enthusiastic. Fifty years after its initial publication, *A Princess of Mars* and all the titles that followed were as popular as ever. Cover paintings by Bob Abbett complimented the tone and approach of the books beautifully.

Now ten years later, there is renewed interest in the Mars series which has resulted in Ballantine reissuing the entire package of books. New covers have been painted by Gino d'Achille, and have the unique feature of combining to become a fantastically large mural when set side by side in order.

Accompanying the new look in covers, will be a large campaign to promote the novels in much the same way as the J. R. R. Tolkein books were handled some years ago, complete with a 24" by 37" full color poster and an "Edgar Rice Burroughs' Mars" mural map, measuring 37" by 52". These items are designed to appeal to a whole new generation of Burroughs fans and will eventually become much sought after collectors' pieces. The big push will begin in October, and Ballantine feels that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MARS 7 A FIGHTING MAN OF MARS
MARS 8 SWORDS OF MARS
MARS 9 SYNTHETIC MEN OF MARS
MARS 10 LLANA OF GATHOL
MARS 11 JOHN CARTER OF MARS
EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
SYNTHETIC MEN OF MARS
MARS 9

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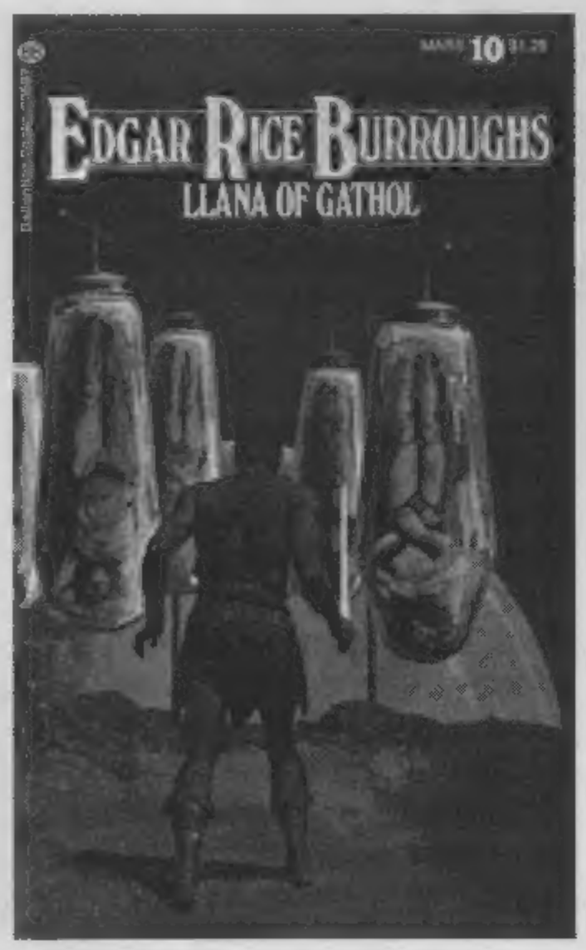
JOHN CARTER OF MARS
MARS 11



John Carter will continue to live in the imagination of people everywhere, and hopes to support the theory by keeping the books, posters and maps available on newsstands and in bookstores across the country.

The present Ballantine reissues, along with their earlier editions will bring the paperback quota of the John Carter series to over two and one half million copies, and there are already plans being made to republish the series again next year.

Also being planned for next year is a book by John Flint Roy, entitled *"A Guidebook To Barsoom: or An Encyclopedia of John Carter's Mars, as reported to Edgar Rice Burroughs."* Flint was a member of the Northwest Canadian Mounted for a time, and a great admirer of Burroughs. The book will contain lavish analytical and descriptive passages and will feature an illustrated glossary of Martian terms. A tentative table of contents will include; a Forward by John Flint Roy; A Geography of Barsoom, including hemispheric maps of the surface, and a Gazetteer-Index; a Biographical Dictionary of People, past and present, whose names appear in the Barsoomian Saga; The Flora and Fauna of Barsoom; A Glossary of Miscellany; and a brief biography of Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Since his original publication, John Carter has been featured in almost every form of popular media. There has been a John Carter of Mars newspaper strip, drawn by John Coleman Burroughs; a succession of Big Little Books and comic books drawn by such artists as Gray Morrow, Jesse Marsh, Murphy Anderson and Sal Amendola. Bob Clampett, famous for his work on the "Beany and Cecil" cartoons, experimented with cartoon versions of John Carter and his adventures. Reed Crandall and Al Williamson have illustrated Carter for Canaveral Press, hardbacks, fanzines and art portfolios.

In 1966, MGM announced plans to film "John Carter of Mars" in Cinerama. The project was shelved when studio executives found out just how much such a production would cost. Still, with the increased interest in the books and the increased penchant for films of violent adventure, John Carter would seem a natural for the screen.

One thing is certain, the first work of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and the series that followed it, will never be forgotten--remaining on the must-read list for all fans of fantastic adventure.

Doug Murray and Ken Bruzenak

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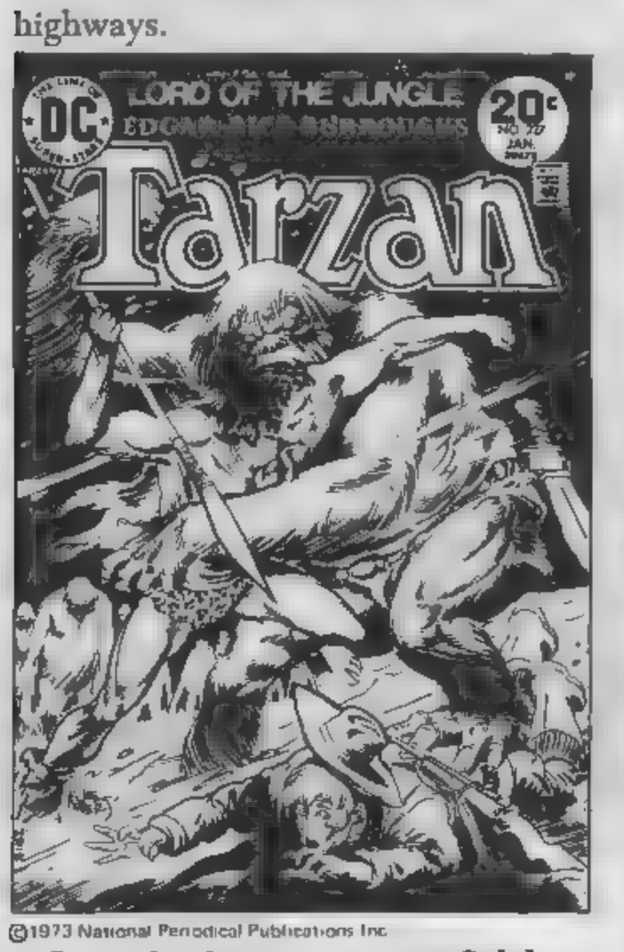
MARS

NATIONAL NEWS

The DC Comicmobile is coming!

In his capacity as Vice-President, Sol Harrison, with Carmine Infantino's aid and approval, has started the wheels of the DC Comicmobile rolling and is thinking seriously about the possibility of a franchise for more of the comic marts of the highways.



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Over the last two years, Sol has received hundreds of letters from readers who have had difficulty in locating their favorite comics. One answer to the problem was the initiation of a subscription policy, but that solution still left a gap in regards to the kids who collected many comics and could not afford the subscription rates for *all* of their favorites. There was also, in the back of Sol's mind, a desire to learn, firsthand, how National comics sold in different parts of the country and how the buying public reacted to the individual efforts behind particular books. With the establishment of the Comicmobile, comics are now available in many areas that normally have difficulty getting them, and direct feedback is available by way of a weekly report from the people working in the truck.

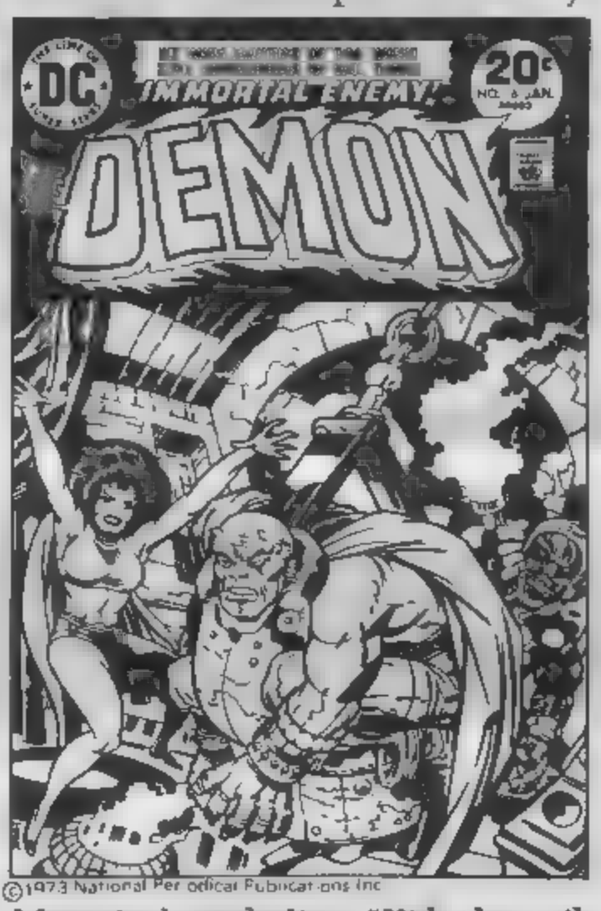
The Comicmobile itself is brightly-colored and decorated with all the heroes and heroines comprising the DC line of superstars. A sign proclaiming "Here Comes the Comicsman" is wrapped around the Supervan and the covers of the latest DC comics are displayed in the windows. Inside, the van is decorated with posters, original artwork, pictures of Superman and the giant "Shazam is Coming!" buttons. Superman cartoons are shown in between comic sales and the driver can be seen wearing a Superman T-shirt while the salesgirl is dressed in a Wonder Woman costume.

Sol plans to get the Comicmobile project underway in the near future on a large scale, so watch your neighborhood for the brightly-colored van, and listen carefully for the ringing bell and the heralding cry, "Faster than a speeding bullet . . ."

Mister Miracle and *The Demon*, two of the comics written, drawn and edited by Jack Kirby, are being cancelled in the very near future. Two new titles will take their place. The exact nature of the new books is still a secret, but at least one of them will revolve around a future worlds theme, totally unrelated to the current *Kamandi* exploits.

Mister Miracle's adventures will conclude in issue 18 as Scott Free marries Big Barda in a ceremony officiated by Highfather. Darkseid attempts to break up the festivities but fails after meeting the combined forces of Highfather, Orion, Lightray, Metron and Mister Miracle. In the end, Oberon and Shilo Norman are left watching as Mr. and Mrs. Free go to live in New Genesis, Darkseid glaring malevolently after them.

The last issue of the *Demon*, number 16, will concern the final battle between the Demon and his nemesis, Morgaine Le Fey, and the theft of the Philosopher's Stone by



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Morgaine's underling. With the evil witch out of the way, the necessity for the Demon's presence is removed, thus the strip is neatly tied off.

The surviving Kirby book, *Kamandi*, will soon bring about the reappearance of Prince Tuftan and Dr. Canus. Ben Boxer and his friends will also return, along with a race of intelligent dolphins, and Kamandi will journey to the remains of Washington D.C. where he encounters another gorilla species that has a religion based upon the Watergate tapes.

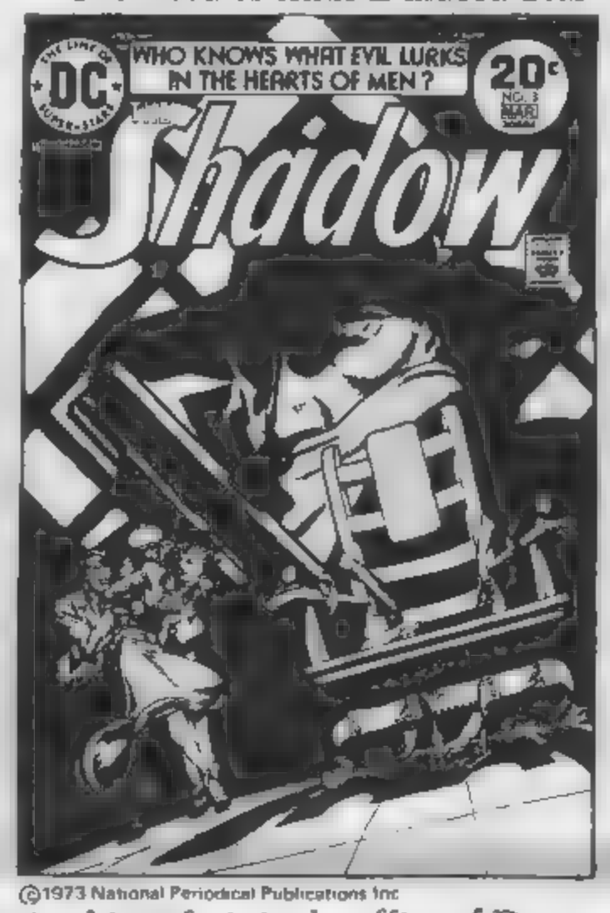
The *Sandman* comic by Kirby, Simon and Royer is on the February schedule and is planned for bimonthly release.

C. C. Beck has, at least for the time being, ceased to draw the adventures of Captain Marvel in the *Shazam* book following his returning two scripts to Julie Schwartz. Bob Oksner and Kurt Schaffenburger will be filling in on the strip for Beck, whose meteoric rise from the anonymity of 20 years can only be compared to his descent, once again to obscurity, that this move entails.

Cashing in on the Karate Kung-Fu movies seems to be everyone's weakness as the big red cheese fights "The Mighty Master of the Martial Arts" in *Shazam* 12.

An upcoming issue of *Superman* will feature a rather bizarre tale, completely outside of the usual Man of Steel story framework. In this adventure, a Boy Scout gets lost in the woods and wanders into a cave. Inside this cave he comes upon an old and decrepit Indian chief who gives him a set of powers and turns him into Captain Thunder. Quicker than you can say Shazam, Captain Thunder is battling with Superman because, while the old Indian gave the boy special powers, he also somehow made him evil in his alter-ego. Thunder, as is fitting, will have an outfit patterned after the original Captain Marvel costume seen in *Whiz* 2.

The weed of crime is indeed bear-



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ing bitter fruit in the office of Denny O'Neil as the deadlines come and go with no noticeable productive effect upon artist Mike Kaluta, or his book, *The Shadow*. Already seriously behind in producing the book, Kaluta has had to get help from Berni Wrightson on the inking of the third issue and for the fourth Denny considered the possibility of relieving him of the artistic responsibility for at least half of the book. Denny and Len Wein have each ten-pages to a story for the fourth issue in the hopes of getting the book in only a few weeks behind schedule.

The Seven Soldiers of Victory are returning to National very soon in an old story with new art. The script, by Joe Samachson, was discovered during the move to the new offices at the Warner Building. The decision was made to have the story used in seperate installments. The Shining Knight chapter will be done by Howie Chaykin (a poor man's Frank Frazetta), Dick Dillin will do the introduction and closing sequences, and Dave Cockrum hopes to draw the Crimson Avenger chapter. The other chapters are unassigned as of yet but the names of Gil Kane and Lee Elias have been mentioned in connection with the job.

The dollar *Batman Giant* will include a number of tales specifically designed to illustrate every decade of Batman's career. From the Golden Age will come three stories drawn by Bob Kane, Jerry Robinson and Dick Sprang, and from the fifties, sixties and seventies will come stories by Carmine Infantino, Neal Adams and Irv Novick. A new cover and a how-to-draw Batman page by Neal Adams will complete the issue. Future dollar giants are to reprint *Superman* 1, *Batman* 1, *Action* 1 and *Detective* 27, complete with the old ads, for nostalgia fans everywhere.

New Catwoman, Penguin and Joker stories will be showing up in the pages of Batman's book in the next year or so, supplemented by a wealth of Golden Age and early sixties Bat-family material to fill out the new 100-page format.

These 100-page books will fall at specified times within the chronology of the regular 20 cent series and will all feature 20 pages of new art backed up by 80 pages of reprints. Every major title will be represented at least once a year by a 100-page Super-spectacular except *Batman* and *Detective*, which are on a bimonthly schedule and will be the 50 cent size every issue.

The contents of the next batch of Super-spectaculars will include;

DETECTIVE—the usual 20 pages of new Batman and Manhunter material supplemented by "The Gotham Gang Line-up" in which Alfred was killed, "The Magic

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World of the Atom" starring Zatanna and the Atom, "The Men Who Moved the World," a Joe Kubert Hawkman story and the "House That Fought Green Lantern," by Alex Toth. All of the back-up features in the *Detective* book will feature a detective theme.

THE WITCHING HOUR—this title will contain a total of 13 stories and will use the introduction and closing sequences from *Witching Hour* 2 as well as the three tales from issue 1. The four new stories will be "Till Death Do Us Join," "Makers of the Mist," "The Ever Constant Drum," and "The Man With the Stolen Eyes."

BATMAN—issue 254 will feature a new Frank Robbins and Irv Novick Man-Bat story titled "The King of Gotham," and a Robin solo story. "The Witch and the Manuscript of Doom" will be the forties representation in the Batman saga, thus setting the theme for the book, showing at least one story from every decade of Batman's life. From the fifties will come the "Bullet-hole Club," and from the sixties will come another in the Outsider series of tales entitled "The Man Who Stole From

Batman." The tale called "The Son of the Joker" has a future setting and is one of the stories that was supposedly written by Alfred. To fill out the book there is a bonus story titled "The Guardian of the Bat-signal."

SUPERMAN—this spectacular will feature three Golden Age tales in addition to its regular new stories. The titles are, "Mr. Mxyztplc returns;" "The Enchanted Mountain;" and a Hocus and Pocus story, "Magicians Convention." Also represented in the book are Supergirl in "Beauty and the Superbeast," Jimmy Olsen in "Demons From Pandora's Box," and Green Lantern and Zatanna in "Demons From the Other Side of the World."

DETECTIVE—for the February-March issue there will be new Batman and Manhunter stories along with "The Riddle of the Clown," a Hawkman story by Joe Kubert; "The Gold Hunters of 49," an Atom time-travel story; an untitled Kid Eternity story concerning a will and a fiendishly clever death-trap; "Batman's Bewitched Nightmare," an untitled Dr. Fate story; and "The Tantalizing Troubles of the Tripod Thieves," starring Elongated Man and Zatanna.

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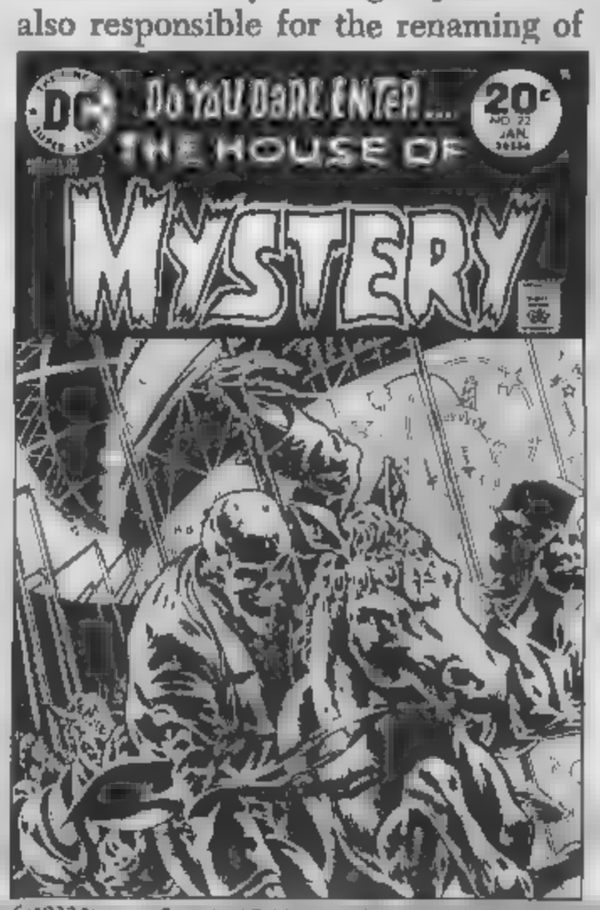
JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA—the new story in this book will be "Who Killed Santa?" and the filler stories will include "Z As in Zatanna and Zero Hour." This is the last Zatanna story, and in it she finally finds her father, for whom she spent many a comic adventure searching. "The Plight of a Nation" is a Justice Society tale dealing with kid gangs and juvenile delinquency.

BATMAN—issue 255 will feature the nearly two-year old Len Wein-Neil Adams story "Moon of the Prowling Wolf," establishing Adams as the most undependable man with a deadline in the world. The very first Batman story will be reprinted in this issue along with "The Duped Domestics," a Catwoman adventure in which Alfred disguised himself as the Batman for the first time. Robin appears in a tale in which he fights Crazy Quilt, and Batgirl stars in "The True False Face of Batman," and, continuing the series, "The Outsider Strikes Again."

DETECTIVE—20 pages of Batman and Manhunter start off the book which continues with "The Inside Story of the Outsider," the final Outsider story in which he is revealed as Alfred. A Simon and Kirby Manhunter story is represented with "Cobras of the Deep" in which the Manhunter has it out with the Nazis. The Dollman makes a guest shot from Feature Comics of 1948 in "The Million Dollar Corpse" and an Alex Toth—Green Lantern tale entitled "Too Many Suspects" rounds out the issue.

The mail coming in on Julie Schwartz's *Strange Sports* stories has been 98% favorable and this couldn't please Julie more. It turns out that Schwartz is not only a science-fiction buff, as many people know, but he is also a sports fan from his days as pitcher for the "Webster Whitewashers." Claiming to have almost single-handedly beat every baseball team in the Bronx years ago, Julie was also responsible for the renaming of



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the team to the Meteors and the Galaxy Athletic and Social Club as his sci-fi interests grew.

The Spectre will have the lead spot in *Adventure* comics soon, as Mike Friedrich and Jim Aparo team up to see if they can save the character from the limbo in which he has rested since Neal Adams last did a job on him. Another character that Joe Orlando is going to try to revive is Aquaman by Steve Skeates and Ramona Fradon in a try-out series of new adventures, hoping to reinstate him into the National line-up after his last appearance written and drawn by the hands of Adams.

Frank Robbins has been drawing up a storm lately for Orlando in the mystery books and *Plop*. Known primarily for his *Batman* writing, and the newspaper strip *Johnny Hazard*, Robbins is an extremely fast and capable artist and writer whose highly-stylized facility and speed make him a welcome addition to the National gang of comics producers.

The Black Orchid will be moving into the back of the Phantom Stranger's book and two more Captain Fear adventures by Alex Nino will appear in her place in issues 432 and 433. Watch out for a special "Circus Issue" of *House of Mystery* with stories by Frank Thorne, Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta as the sick humor of *Plop* slowly pervades editor Orlando's brain and he takes on the world of the carnival.

Len Wein and Berni Wrightson's success on the *Swamp Thing* appears to be continuing unabated as the team consistently places well on the National sales score-card. Berni has just turned in "Stalker From Beyond" with an inking assist from Jeff Jones, and is hard at work on the next Wein wonder, "The Man Who Would Not Die."

Julie Schwartz was recently assigned the *Wonder Woman* book and Len Wein has been chosen to write the adventures of the *NEW* ("Play it again, Sam") *Wonder Woman*. This time around its to be Diana Prince who is going to become glamorous and Wonder Woman who'll get the new outfit.

Len Wein's fondness for strips in which the artist is called upon to draw impossible shots or fill every panel with ten people continues in issue 110 of the *Justice League of America*. This time around Dick Dillin and Dick Giordano are going to be working on a job that contains the JLA and Kronos, The Scarecrow, Poison Ivey, The Shadow Thief, Libra, and a new Tatooed Man. Is Len getting paid by the character?

Issue 111 will feature the Demon or Deadman (knowing Len, probably both) in a team-up with the League against Lazarus Legend, at the end of which the powers of the

THE STRANGEST TEAM-UP IN HISTORY
the BRAVE and the BOLD
WANTED
THE JOKER
STAY BACK! HOWDY, PUS. A HAND ON MY PARTNER WHILE I'M AROUND!
"DEATH HAS THE LAST LAUGH"
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League members will be halved. Number 112 will entail turning over the book to the Justice Society in lieu of the annual JLA JSA team-up. But don't worry, the League does make a cameo appearance in the book. The Black Green Lantern will be the guest in issue 113, and in the following book, Hawkman returns.

Murray Boltinoff will be teaming the Batman with a number of interesting partners in the pages of *Brave and Bold* very soon. The first will be the Joker in a tale titled "Death Has the Last Laugh," and Mister Miracle will be appearing in "The Impossible Escape."

The *Lois Lane* book will be coming under Boltinoff's editorial hand with number 138 and Murray plans to do a little something special with this member of the Superman "family." Incidentally, the title *Secrets of Sinister House* will become *Secrets of the Haunted House* with issue 16.

Joe Kubert is doing a number of unrelated, filler stories for *Tarzan* before plunging once again into the next of the Burrough's novels. Joe feels that the Tarzan storyline could use some "fleshing out" in between the adapted novels, and Joe himself would like to explore the Opar angle more fully. In time, the *"Jungle Tales of Tarzan"* will be told and some insight into the taciturn jungle lord will be forthcoming, supplementing and expanding upon the Edgar Rice Burroughs creation.

A great deal of Kubert's time has been taken up lately with his usual cover drawings for his and other books, plus a couple of special projects. These projects are being done in secret and involve a number of National's Philippine artists, primarily Nestor Redondo. Working from highly-detailed layouts by Kubert, Redondo has been laboring over a new strip, *Rima, the Jungle Girl*, which promises to be as dramatically powerful and beautifully lyrical as Tarzan. Freely adapted from the novel *Green Mansions*, it promises to be full of the usual breathtaking

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beauty and storytelling that one comes to associate with the name of Joe Kubert. The first issue goes on sale in January.

There is also another special project in the works by Kubert, so secret that we can't tell you yet. Even the editors at National don't fully know about this idea, but you can count on *Comixscene* to release this item as soon as Kubert lets us know all the details.

Writer Don Glut has been around to the National offices lately and managed to sell three stories to Denny O'Neil for use in the *Dark Mansion* title. The titles of the tales are "Demons are Made Not Born," "Ms. Vampire Killer" and "Type Ghast." Don has also sold two plots titled "3D" and "A Matter of Execution" to Joe Orlando for use in the *House of Mystery*.

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The BLUE BOOK cover for the Edgar Rice Burroughs story, "Tarzan at the Earth's Core," painted by Frank Hoban.

BURROUGHS OF THE PULPS

Illustration by Frank Hoban from BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

The pulps have produced many famous characters and many famous writers. Tennessee Williams got his start in *Weird Tales*. The famous Dr. Kildare series was written by Max Brand for *Argosy*. Many Pulitzer Prize winning authors wrote stories for the pulps. But, undoubtedly, the most important fantasy writer ever to emerge from the pulp magazines was Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Burroughs was born in 1875, son of a fairly well-to-do family. He was not a particularly successful young man and failed in a number of business attempts. In his thirties, he turned to writing. His first story was submitted to *The All-Story Magazine*, which was entitled, "Dejah Thoris Princess of Mars." Burroughs, afraid that readers might think a writer with such a vivid imagination was some sort of strange character, had the story authored by "Normal Bean." The novel was bought and appeared in *All-Story* as "Under the Moons of Mars" by Norman Bean, serialized from February thru July 1912. Burroughs' love affair with the pulp magazines had begun. In the next thirty years, nearly every manuscript submitted by Edgar Rice Burroughs to the pulps was bought and published, usually at a rate much higher than other writers received for their contributions to the magazines.

In the early years though, things were not as easy as one might be inclined to believe. Sam Moskowitz in his history of *All-Story* (Under the Moons of Mars—A History of the Scientific Romance 1912-1920) described the troubles Burroughs had selling material to *All-Story*. As an author, he did not like revising and, along with his better manuscripts, submitted poor material to the magazine. When *All-Story* began to reject some of Burroughs' material, he went to other pulps of the period. *All-Story* relented and consequently a majority of Burroughs' stories were first serialized in its pages.

Before any such trouble though, the novel that was to establish Burroughs as the new literary star of *All Story* was to appear in the October 1912 issue of the magazine. "Tarzan of the Apes" was published complete in that one issue making it a rare collector's item. The story of Tarzan, a boy raised by the apes, has many anticedents, but Burroughs was the man who, more than any other, including Rudyard Kipling with his *Jungle Book*, made that story his own. Reader reaction was overwhelming. Burroughs followed up next with a story based on ideas suggested by the editor of *All-Story*. John Carter returned in "The Gods of Mars" in 1913, making it a series that was now firmly entrenched. *All-Story*, though, began to give Burroughs trouble, rejecting some of his manuscripts. As a result, "The Return of Tarzan" was snapped up quickly by a new magazine being published by Street and Smith, *New Story*.

All-Story countered with two novels, unrelated to any series. "The Cave Girl" and "A Man Without a Soul" were both published in *All-Story* in 1913, and were somewhat in the Tarzan vein—the first dealing with a man's adventure's on a lost island, where he must become a Tarzan-like hero to win the girl he loves, and the second novel about a scientist's experiments trying to create a perfect human. Neither was top flight ERB material.

John Carter returned to *All-Story* in 1913, with "Warlord of Mars," while *New Story* countered with an earlier written Burroughs novel which had been rejected by *All-Story*, The Outlaw of Torn," a fast-paced adventure novel set in the middle ages, filled with knights, tournaments and the usual Burroughs action.

Several other minor novels followed in *All-Story* in 1914, until the April 4 issue. "At the Earth's Core" was a new serial which attracted new readers to the ERB banner. David Innes and Abner Perry invent a machine like a giant drill. This "mole" takes them through the Earth's crust to a hollowed-out cavern at the earth's core. As this interior world has a much greater surface area than our normal world, there was plenty of room for adventure, especially when Burroughs liberally stocked it with all sorts of monsters left over from the dinosaur age, as well as several monsters of his own creation.

In 1914, a major happening outside the pulp field assured Burroughs popularity for all time. Tarzan had been offered to major book publishers ever since its publication in magazine form but no publisher wanted to risk such a novel. However, newspaper serialization of the story proved so popular that the A. C. McClurg Company brought out *Tarzan of the Apes* in 1914. The book was a smash best-seller. From then on, everything Burroughs wrote was immediately published in hardcover, reprinted again and again, and soon was being made into movies.

All Story-Cavalier published "The Beasts of Tarzan" in mid-1914. A few minor novels later, David Innes returned to "Pellucidar," the land at the Earth's core. "The Son of Tarzan" was a serial in *All-Story* at the end of 1915. 1916 saw a new novel about Mars, the first where John Carter was not the lead. "Thuvia, Maid of Mars," a fast-paced action epic with many strange and unusual races on Mars, featured the adventures of John Carter's son.

Burroughs was set in the pulps. From time to time, he would introduce a new character and begin a new series. Otherwise, he continued to write a novel featuring one of his series' characters with a somewhat repetitive plot but new surroundings. "The Land That Time Forgot" was a short novel in the March 1918 *Blue Book*. It introduced a lost continent in the region past Australia and featured a new and unusual form of evolution. Three novels appeared, all in the same year, detailing the adventures of a submarine crew that stumbled on this lost world.

Tarzan serials continued, now in the retitled *Argosy All-Story*. *Argosy* also published the novel, "The Moon Maid" in 1923. This was the first of three stories about a civilization inside the moon. In the first novel, taking place after a rocket lands on the moon, all action is inside the lost world, filled with the usual Burroughs' monsters and a race of centaurs. The second novel, "The Moon Man," in 1925, has Earth conquored by the Moon. And, a third novel, "The Red Hawk," takes place generations later with Earthmen overthrowing the dictatorship of the moon.

Pellucidar novels, Tarzan novels, and even an occasional novel about Mars continued to flow from the pen of Edgar Rice Burroughs. When *Amazing Stories Annual* 1927 was issued, featuring the full-length Martian novel, "The Mastermind of Mars," Burroughs' name was in bigger letters than the magazine title!

From time to time, there was an unrelated novel. "The Land of Hidden Men" published in *Blue Book* as a serial in 1931 was a lost race novel taking place in the jungles of the far east. Two novels about the Apaches, drawing on Burroughs knowledge of the west, "The Apache Devil" and "The War Chief" were serials in *Argosy* in the late 1920's.

In 1932, Burroughs invaded a new planet, Venus, in the first of a series of new books detailing the adventures of Carson Napier, who, while intending to fly in a rocket to Mars, lands on Venus instead. Three Venus novels appeared in *Argosy* in the thirties.

Burroughs' pen never rested. He wrote novel after novel through the thirties, most of them appearing in *Argosy*. A western novel, "The Terrible Tenderfoot", one of his most minor works, was the featured serial in the March thru May 1940 issues of *Thrilling Adventures*. Also during this period, numerous short novels and novelettes featuring John Carter and Carson of Venus, as well as several Pellucidar stories, appeared in *Amazing Stories*. All of these stories, four to a set, were collected in hardcover form, the Pellucidar series not being finished (as the last one was not published until 1963) till the middle sixties, the other two books being "Llana of Gathol" and "Escape on Venus."

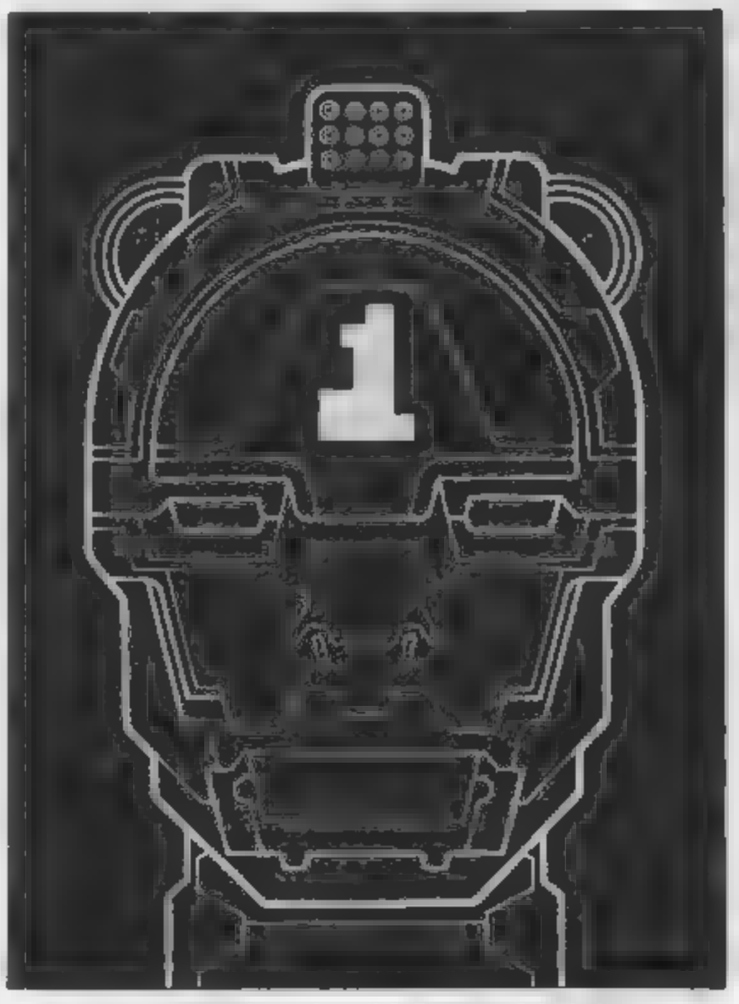
"Beyond the Farthest Star," a new series,began in *Blue Book* in January 1942. The setting was a far star system with thousands of worlds circling one huge sun. Tangor was the hero of this intended series. Also, a new John Carter story, "Skeleton Men of Jupiter," was published in *Amazing* in February 1943, the evident start of a new series of John Carter stories. But, the War halted all of ERB's writings, and after that, poor health prevented his return to the pulps. He died in 1950, without a doubt, the uncrowned King of the Pulps.

Robert Weinberg

AVAILABLE NOW!

Once in a decade an artist like MIKE HINGE comes along who shatters the traditional approach to imaginative illustration and produces a new kind of visual wonder. Following in the footsteps of the great science fiction artists like Frank Paul, Chesley Bonestell, Virgil Finlay, Ed Emshwiller, Kelly Freas, Jack Gaughan, and Richard Powers, MIKE HINGE has added his unique style and concepts to their ranks. Striking out in bold, new directions HINGE has executed a fantastic series of drawings as beautiful as they are exciting. Assembled here for the first time in a complete book, they represent the full range of the artist's sweeping graphic approach, superb sense of design, and unusual rendering styles. Over 70 astonishing illustrations are reproduced in this giant Supergraphics-size volume (10½" x 14"), and bound beneath a unique silver and black cover representative of the men and machines inside. THE MIKE HINGE EXPERIENCE explodes with incredible, new ideas and mind-blowing graphics guaranteed to turn you on. Never before has such a sumptuous portfolio of drawings been offered. Within these pages HINGE visualizes a dynamic tomorrow of machinery and magic, spacemen, women, robots and androids--all the wonders of inner and outer space--with a touch of electronic wizardry. Expect the unexpected when you get THE MIKE HINGE EXPERIENCE.

THE MIKE HINGE EXPERIENCE



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MEDIA SCENE

The hottest newcomer in the fantasy film field today is lovely Caroline Munro. After her recent appearance as the second female lead in *Dracula A.D. 1972*, she has gone on to lead roles in two more films. Miss Munro is the princess (John Phillip Law's sweetheart) in *Sinbad's Golden Voyage*, and the female lead in *Kronos*, Hammer's new, and somewhat different, horror flick. *Kronos* is a swashbuckling, sword-wielder who goes around the world seeking and destroying vampires. The film, which is the first in a projected series, will have its American premiere in late fall. However, look for a title change to avoid confusion with the 1957 20th Century Fox film concerning a giant, electricity-eating automaton. The Hammer film stars Jack Cason, Shane Briant, and Horst Jackson in addition to Miss Munro.

Also from Hammer; *Satanic Rites of Dracula* (formerly *Dracula is Dead and Well and Living in London*) is scheduled for December release. The film is a sequel to last year's *Dracula A.D. 1972* and concerns a police investigation of a devil-worshipping cult that has involved a cabinet minister. It turns out the devil-worshippers include our old pal, Count Dracula, and a number of vampire girls. Dr. Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) is called in to aid the fight and he, of course, destroys Dracula (again).

Other new titles in the planning stages at Hammer include: *Zeppelin vs Pterodactyl* (Harryhausen?), *When the Earth Cracked Open*, and *Mistress of the Seas*.

Vampire movies are very big currently, possibly because of the increased interest in the occult and the general rise of violence in movies. Scheduled for release soon are: *Count Dracula* with Cristopher Lee in the starring role. This is the long awaited straight remake of the Bram Stoker book which has been held up in litigation for almost three years. The story goes back to the original image of the vampire as an immortal force of evil which needs blood to live and remain young. Starring with Lee is Herbert Lom as Prof. van Helsing.

In Search of Dracula is a documentary version of the book of the same title by Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu. The movie traces the historical roots of the Dracula legend and his filmic interpretations. Chris Lee narrates the movie and appears as Vlad Tepes Dracul (the original Dracula) and as the filmic Dracula. Most of the film's exteriors were shot in Transylvania (Rumania) including footage in the real Castle Dracula.

Freddie Francis, who has directed many of Hammer's best films has a new work about to be released. It is *Count Downe* starring Ringo Starr as the title vampire.

Amicus is filming *Deathday* with Peter Cushing and Chris Lee (again). This is the film originally announced by AIP as *Devil Day* and is based on the occult novel by Angus Hall.

Disciple of Death is another English feature so far unscheduled in the U.S. It concerns a damned soul recalled to 18th Century England who rises from the grave spreading havoc among the townspeople. It is finally defeated by the village parson armed with his faith, and three magic weapons supplied by an old Jewish cabalist. The film stars Mike Raven and Virginia Wetherall (last seen as test #2 in *Clockwork Orange*).

The Final Programme is finally under way at Elstree Studios. The film is based on the fine sci-fi novel by Michael Moorcock about a computer which attempts to take over the world.

Chosen Survivors is Metromedia's first feature since *Tales from the Crypt*. It concerns survivors of a nuclear holocaust who hide in caverns and are attacked by hordes of vampire bats. Release in early Fall.

Amicus, after their great success with *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror* are planning productions of *Crypt of Terror* and *Tales of the Incredible*, both based on E. C. comic stories. The job now will be to get permission from Bill Gaines, who was not happy with the first two productions.

After the success of *Patton*, 20th Century has announced plans for *MacArthur* another war epic. Casting is now being done and considered for the title role are George C. Scott, John Wayne and Paul Newman.

Executive Action, a movie about the assassination of JFK, is now being shot in California and Texas. The film is being kept under heavy wraps to prevent interference from the FBI or CIA. The film features Burt Lancaster, the late Robert Ryan and Will Geer, and is being shot by National General, the company who releases all those Kung Fu movies.

Something new in the film world will premiere in October. It is the American Film Theatre, a series of plays, starring top names, which can be seen only by subscription to the whole series. There are 8 films in all: *The Iceman Cometh; A Delicate Balance, Luther, Butley, The Homecoming, Rhinoceros, The Three Sisters*, and *Lost in the Stars*. Actors include Lee Marvin, Katherine Hepburn, Zero Mostel, and Laurence Olivier. If the experiment is successful, look for an expanded version next year and a possible hookup with pay TV.

Clint Eastwood's newest flick is *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot*, a private eye drama featuring Jeff Bridges as Lightfoot (Eastwood's partner) with George Kennedy as the villian.

The death of the 33-year old Karate—Kung Fu expert, Bruce Lee, seems to have put a damper on the production of the martial arts films he symbolized and popularized. *Enter the Dragon* was the last of his "iron fist" movies, and appears to have also been the last big moneymaker in the field. A cult-like following was building for the highly-exaggerated antics of such films as *Fists of Fury* and *The Chinese Connection*, and particularly for the stoically brutal characterizations Lee lent to the roles before his death due to brain damage that may have been induced by marijuana. Actors Steve McQueen and James Coburn were pallbearers for Lee's funeral, which needed police protection from nearly 12,000 screaming fans.

The big news from Warner Brothers studios lately is the flurry of rumors flying about concerning the possibility of their producing a *Tarzan* film that will be faithful to the original novel in every detail possible. At the recent Toronto SF convention, the names of Mike Nichols as producer and Nichols and Roman Polanski as directors were mentioned. As of this time, nothing has been set and the stories are only rumors, Nevertheless, there is something of this nature underway for Tarzan, and a similar movement progressing for another Burroughs title, *The Land That Time Forgot*.

The animation industry seems to be experiencing a boom in employment opportunities due to a general resurgence in the cartoon field. Among the prime movers in this upswing are Hanna-Barbera and their feature-length production of *Heide*, De Patie-Freleng and their *Flip Wilson Show* commitments, Disney Studios with their productions of *Robin Hood* and a new project called *The Rescuers*, and Steve Krantz and Ralph Bakshi who, between themselves, *Fritz the Cat, Heavy Traffic* and *The Nine Lives of Fritz the Cat*, have broadened the range and spectrum of the funny animal animation field considerably.

The Shadow TV—movie that was originally mentioned in *Comixscene* a while ago, has once again surfaced amidst a flurry of "maybes." Clayton Moore, the Lone Ranger of yesteryear, is reported to have starred in the first of what he hopes to be a series of Shadow TV films, leading to his comeback in the field.

RCA Red Label Records continues their releases of famous movie music with *Captain from Castille and Others* by Alfred Neumann, one of the most prolific of film scorers. Included is the title piece, *Fantastic Voyage, Casablanca*, and 8 others.

More Nostalgic Records; Humphrey Bogart in *The Maltese Falcon*, Karloff in *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and Lugosi in *The Doctor Prescribed Death*. Radio show albums: Little Orphan Annie, Captain Midnight, Buck Rogers, Dick Tracy, and Superman, with more to come.

Neal Adams has finished the poster art for *Count Dracula* and is back to work on *WARP*. *WARP* has been resurrected in a Washington D.C. production. It's success there has encouraged the producer to reopen in New York and this will probably happen in mid-September. No theater arranged as yet.

Not one to let success go to his head, Joe Wambaugh has returned to his job as a Los Angeles police detective. Wambaugh has little need to return to police work, since his novels *The New Centurions* and the *Blue Knight* have both made it to the screen. The TV series, *Police Story*, is based upon the exploits from the lives of policemen everywhere and is supervised by Wambaugh.

The film business in Europe is proving to be a successful means of gainful employment to the team of Charles Bronson, director Michael Winner and producer Dino De Laurentis as they continue to turn out film after film, and what is more, do it with substantial returns at the box office.

As the actor of the trio, Bronson is enjoying a great deal of popularity for his rough-tough acting approach in such films as *Chato's Land, The Mechanic* and *The Black Circle*, all directed by Michael Winner. Bronson's success appears to be primarily in the European market which has followed his films with an almost religious fervor since his early appearances in such films as Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in The West* and the more recent *Valachi Papers* directed by Terry Young.

As the directorial end of the group, Winner has carefully chosen the type of projects and roles that the public wishes to see Bronson in and directs with the flamboyent stylishness that keeps the films moving and selling.

De Laurentis is the most recent entry in this success package, and also the most important. It is his job to see that the money is always there for the film projects, a job he is so good at that the most recent Bronson/Winner/De Laurentis picture, *The Stone Killer*, was paid for and guaranteed to make money nine months after the idea was first discussed—weeks before the lensing was completed.

Don Glut seems to be writing up a storm at Gold Key, teaming again with artist Jesse Santos in *The Occult Files of Dr. Spektor* 5 story "Dr. Spektor & Mr. Hyde." Spektor gets a bit too involved in his work and transforms into a modern day Hyde.

Spektor 6 has "The Dungeon of Frankenstein," with a descendant of Victor Frankenstein seeking Lakota's brain for the Monster's mate.

Spektor 7 pits the Doctor against Ostellon, the villain from *Dagar* 1 and introduces the Dark Gods/Warrior Gods conflict to the book. Spektor learns that he is descended from both Dagar and the caveman hero, Tragg (who appeared in "Cry of the Dire Wolf" in *Mystery Comics Digest* 3, in *Dagar* 5). Second story in this issue stars Lakota as a teenager on her Indian reservation. Title is "Burial at Fallen Leaf."

Dagar 6 features two stories: "The Treasure of Nai-Po-Gah," which begins the evolution of Graylin into a more dynamic character than she's been in the past, the first story to actually introduce the Dark Gods/Warrior Gods conflict hinted at in previous *Dagars*. The second story is "Demon of the Temple," originally intended for *Mystery Comics Digest* when the character was still known as "Daggar."

Dagar 7: "Two Swords Against Zora-Zal," with Dagar shanghaied on a slave ship where he meets Gold Key's other S & S hero, Durak (formerly Duroc, changed because it sounded too much like Turok). This is Duroc/Durak's fourth appearance thus far.

MAINSTREAM

The Brass Ring is the sometimes hilarious, sometimes tragic, always compelling autobiography of the man who made millions of people laugh at a time when the world seemed in danger of coming to an end, and then went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for his insight into the men who fought and died for their country.

Published by BERKLEY BOOKS, *The Brass Ring* by Bill Mauldin reveals his life as a cartoonist, and the development of the two characters that became symbols of Army life, Willie and Joe. Beginning with his tumultuous youth and through a period of scrambling to make a living, Mauldin looks back on his first 23 years with an almost detached air of humor and objectivity. With brisk and unvarnished honesty, he recounts his adventures before and during his stay in the service, relating them to the growth of the two irreverant caricatures of military life that would earn him the condemnation of his superiors and the admiration of his peers.

Lavishly illustrated, the book abounds with anecdotes and incidents, punctuated with poignantly funny and meaningful illustrations that reveal the lot of the dog face.

Mauldin's cartoons were enjoyed by millions of service-men and civilians all over the world due to their publication in the Armed Service's papers, *Yank* and *Stars and Stripes*, and in civilian papers around the world. Coupled with the fact that the collected adventures of Willie and Joe, titled *Up Front*, sold in hardcover by the millions, Mauldin may emerge as one of the most widely read cartoonists in history.

The only complaint that can be offered concerning *The Brass Ring* is that it ends with Mauldin's discharge from the Army and does not go on to encompass the furthur adventures of Willie and Joe in their civilian exploits. *Back From The Front*, the films based upon the characters, or Mauldins own movie career in John Huston's *The Red Badge of Courage*.

Try FAWCETT'S *Stepford Wives*, for a chill on a warm evening. When Joanna Eberhart and her husband Walter moved to the quiet suburb of Stepford, she thought they had left behind the dangers of the crime-ridden city. Joanna felt safe now. Then, little by little, dark suspicions began to blacken the bright picture. Stepford wasn't just a quiet little town. There was an evil secret hidden in Stepford—a secret Joanna was almost afraid to guess. In this fiendishly entertaining novel, Ira Levin, author of *Rosemary's Baby*, takes us into the suburbs, where the wives of Stepford fall prey to an unspeakable menace. You will never forget Stepford. Gripping, tense.

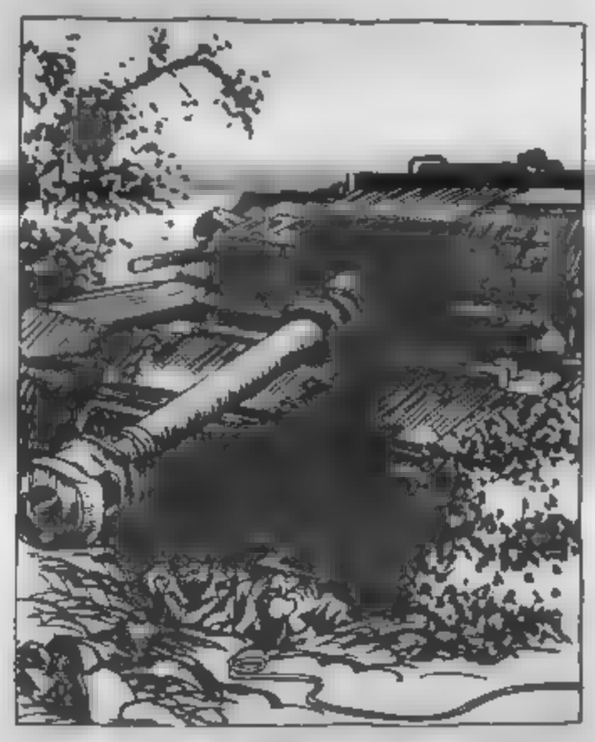
The Wizard's back! The wonderful Wizard of Id is back in the sixth collection of Brant Parker and Johnny Hart's hilarious cartoons. With more adventures of the cowardly knight, the eccentric king, the damsel in distress, and the wondrous Wizard himself. Other Wizard books available from FAWCETT GOLD MEDAL are *The Peasants are Revolting, The Wondrous Wizard of Id, The King is a Fink*, and *There's a Fly in My Swill.*

Marilyn Monroe, Her Own Story, an AWARD BOOKS publication making its appearance in September, has now been expanded to contain 112 profusely illustrated pages. The text is written by *New York Post* reporter George Carpozi, Jr., and is based on a long-time professional acquaintanceship and personal friendship with Marilyn Monroe. It includes a lengthy personal interview in which she told Carpozi her life story. A must for MM fans.

"Hit th' dirt, boys!"

"I can't git no lower, Willie. Me buttons is in th' way"

"Them rats! Them dirty, cold-blooded, soreheaded, stinkin' Huns. Them atrocity commitin' skunks..."



"Able Fox Five to Able Fox. I got a target, but ya gotta be patient."

Mauldin's Manifesto: maneuvers, mischief, mayhem and misery!

Long famous for witchcraft, killing and the shrinking of their enemies' heads, the Jivaro Indians of the Ecquadorian Amazon are the subject of *The Jivaro*, Michael Harner's fascinating and authoritative account of the vanishing way of life. Dr. Harner explains the importance of hallucinogens in Jivaro culture, and the reasons why killing is a highly-desirable activity. Available now from DOUBLEDAY ANCHOR BOOKS.

The first of four historical novels by Samuel Shellabarger makes its appearance from AVON this month. *Captain From Castile*, which has sold over a million copies since its initial publication, chronicles the adventures of a young aristocratic Spaniard who embarks with Cortes on the historic expedition to conquer Mexico. In the coming months, look for *Lord Vanity, The King's Cavalier* and *Prince of Foxes.*

A number of hardbound books will be out for Christmas sale in the next few months that will be of special interest to those who enjoy the popular arts in commercial media. Several books are in preparation on the works of Maxfield Parrish, the artist whose unusual use of color and design has currently made him as collectable as Rockwell. Coy Ludwig's book will contain 224 pages with 120 black and white illustrations and 64 in color—$25.00. *Maxfield Parrish—the Early Years: 1893-1930* by Paul Skeeters runs 365 pages with 200 illustrations, 150 of which are in color—$59.95. Both books are available from JAAP REITMAN BOOKS, 157 Spring Street, New York City 10012.

Harry Abrams, who published that big, beautiful Norman Rockwell book a few years ago, will release *The Art of Walt Disney* this month. This lavish collector's volume traces Disney productions from the very beginning—over 750 illustrations. A must for all animation fans. $45.00.

California is a family Dynasty! Three generations who live and love, marry and divorce, gather wealth and fame, fight and die in America's new promised land. *California* is a proud history! The fevered excitement of the Gold Rush. A brawling battle for independence. The terror and chaos of the great San Francisco earthquake, the lusty struggle for land, the furious creation of the movie industry, and the emergence of a daring new way of American life. *California* by Leland Cooley is a great novel! An epic, burning story told by a man who has lived and loved the American dream as it could only happen in the greatest state. From AVON—destined to be a best seller.

A must for all film fans is being released by AVON this month, *Memo From David O. Selznick.* Almost as famous as his films (King Kong, A star Is Born, Gone With The Wind, etc.) are the myriad memos he wrote during their production. Editor Behlmer has gathered the best of these memos along with letters, telegrams and personal notes to put together an engrossing study of the movie business as told from the inside. Almost 50 pages of photos illuminate the text. Fascinating reading!

As of this month, LANCER BOOKS has ceased publication. Whether the move is permanent or not is yet to be determined. *Conan of Aquilonia*, the 11th of the series got in just under the wire and will be on the newsstands this month.

Jonathan Hemlock, man-about-town, assassin and hero of *The Eiger Sanction* faces a doubly difficult task in this bestselling novel by Trevanian, available from AVON this month. He must join a team of mountain climbers who are attempting to scale the Eiger Peak in the Alps, and assassinate a team member during the climb. Things get tougher when he fails to discover who his target is, while his adversary tries to make him the fall guy. Paul Newman will star soon in Universal's filming of this thriller, while *The Loo Sanction*, Hemlock's next adventure will be published in hardcover in November. A real sizzler!

BESTSELLING PAPERBACKS
Sept.-Oct. 1973

1 - *I'm OK—You're OK*
Thomas Harris—Avon 1.95
2 - *Report To The Commissioner*
James Mills—Pocket Books 1.75
3 - *The Lovomaniacs*
Rona Barrett—Bantam 1.50
4 - *The Winds of War*
Herman Wouk—Pocket Books 2.25
5 - *Shelia Levine Is Dead and Living In New York*
Gail Parent—Bantam 1.50
6 - *Letters To The Happy Hooker*
Xaviera Hollander—WPL 1.50
7 - *Captains And The Kings*
Taylor Caldwell—Fawcett 1.75
8 - *I Come As A Thief*
Louis Auchincloss—Avon 1.50
9 - *The Scarlet Ruse*
John MacDonald—Fawcett 1.25
10- *To Look And To Pass*
Taylor Caldwell—Fawcett 1.25

UP AND COMING BESTSELLERS

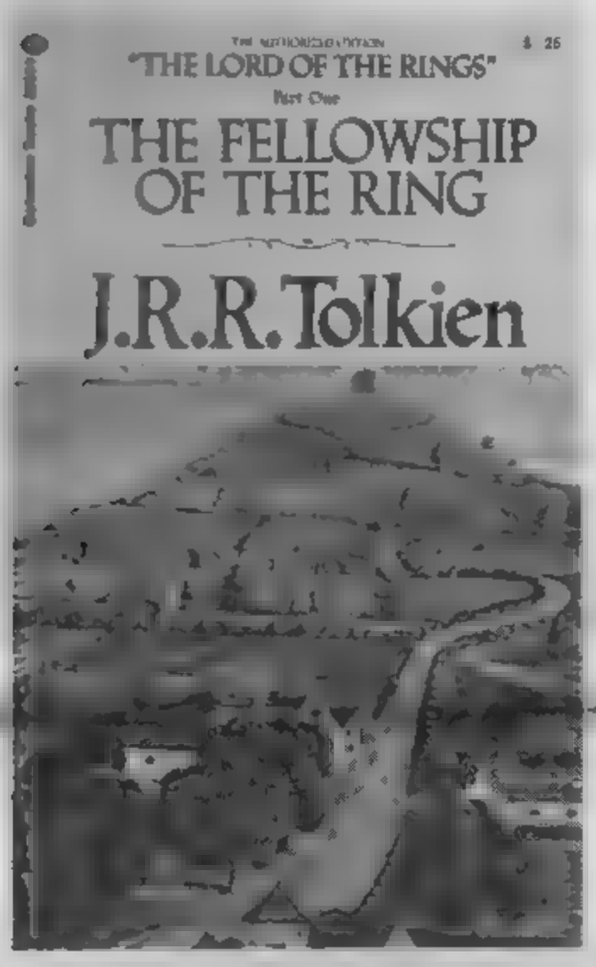
1 - *The Eiger Sanction*
Trevanian—Avon 1.75
2 - *Semi-Tough*
Dan Jenkins—Signet 1.75
3 - *To Serve Them All My Days*
R. F. Delderfield—Pocket Books 1.75
4 - *Necessary Objects*
Lois Gould—Dell 1.75
5 - *Limbo Of The Lost*
John Spencer—Bantam 1.50
6 - *On The Night Of The Seventh Moon*
Victoria Holt—Fawcett 1.50
7 - *Slimming Down*
Ed McMahon—WPL 1.50
8 - *The Shrewsdale Exit*
John Buell—Pocket Books 1.50
9 - *The Advertising Man*
Jack Dillon—Fawcett 1.25
10- *Us*
Anonymous—Bantam 1.50

SCIENCE FICTION

It is with profound regret that we report the death of the foremost writer of high fantasy and adventure, J. R. R. Tolkien. During his lifetime, he was able to witness and enjoy the cult which grew up to herald the Lord of the Rings trilogy as the supreme achievement in the genre of fantastic literature.

John Ronald Rueul Tolkien was born on January 3, 1892 in Bloemfontein, South Africa of British parentage and German descent. He was educated at Exeter College in Oxford, England and eventually became an Oxford don, teaching English language and literature.

As a boy in the English Midlands, Tolkien recalled he "desired dragons with a profound desire." As a man, he created out of a rare combination of imagination, a sweeping sense of

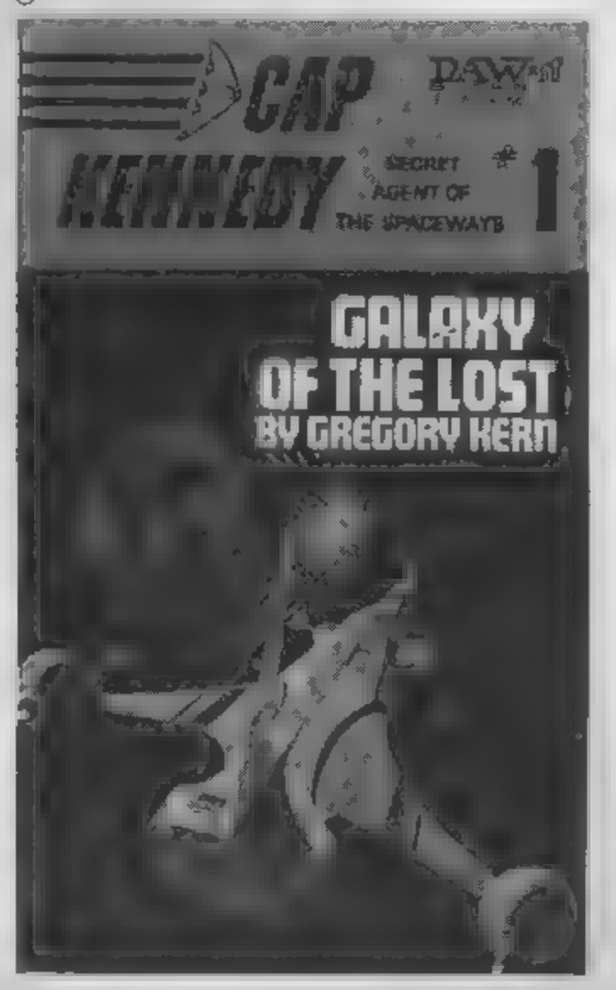


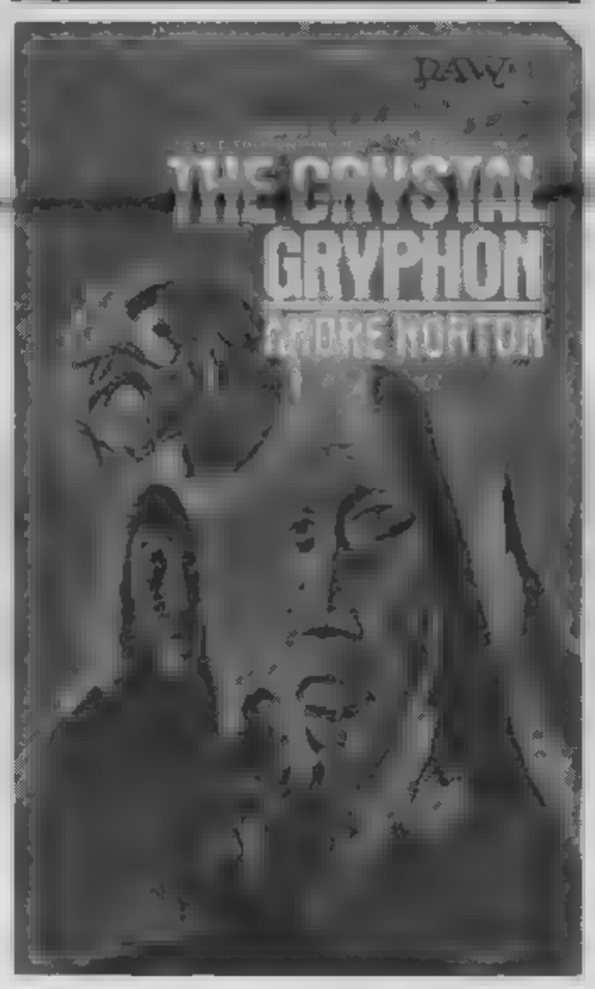
epic storytelling, and a magical way with words, the landscape of Middle-earth, which, translated from the Old English word, *Middengeart,* means "inhabited lands between the seas."

Middle-earth was "discovered" in 1937 when Tolkien was persuaded to publish *The Hobbit,* a book he had written years earlier, when his children were young, though he insists he did not write it for them. During a long session where he was correcting dull exam papers, Tolkien, without thinking much about it, turned over a blank sheet of paper and wrote, "In a hole in the ground, there lived a hobbit." At the time, he didn't know what a hobbit was, but before long, the now famous image appeared as if by magic in his mind. It was a plump-stomached, cheerful creature like a very short man with leather-soled feet and hair growing atop them. The hobbit's name was Bilbo, and he lived in a burrow in a section of Middle-earth called the Shire, not at all unlike Tolkien's childhood community surroundings. *The Hobbit,* and the books that followed over the next fourteen years, tell the tale of a mystic ring, of Bilbo's nephew, Frodo, and his quest to withstand and destroy the awesome power of the Ring.

This month, BALLANTINE BOOKS is reissuing the Middle-earth saga: *The Hobbit,* the prelude to the series, and the Rings trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Rings, The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King.* New covers for the series use Tolkien's own color paintings of Middle-earth. A definite MUST for all lovers of fantasy fiction.

An SF original, well off the beaten path, may be found in Isidore Haiblum's *Transfer To Yesterday,* another BALLANTINE release. This is a non-stop detective-mystery in the guise of science fiction. Set simul-

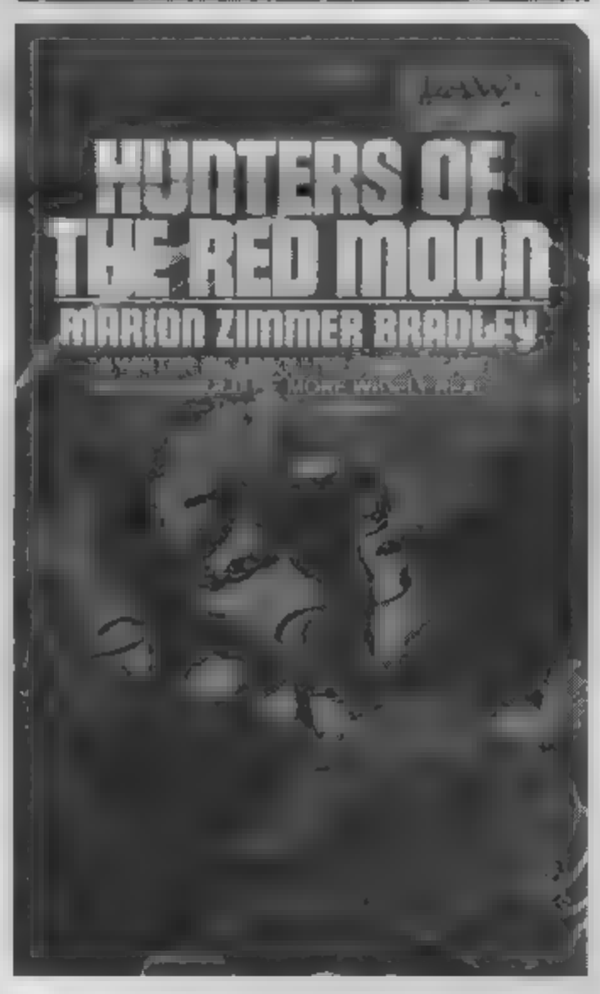




taneously in the depression-laden 1930's and in a distant nightmare future, *Yesterday* continues and celebrates the tradition of Hammett, Chandler and the *Black Mask* school of writing. Combining the tough guy, idiomatic realism of the private eye yarn with the speculative romanticism of science fiction, Haiblum expands and enriches both genres.

Another BALLANTINE original on tap is Philip Jose Farmer's *Traitor To The Living.* They called it Medium—a heartwarming machine—designed to provide a connection with the dead. Now all the world could reach their loved ones—at a price. Anything that emotionally loaded and carrying that kind of price tag could be a powerful political weapon. But no one, not even the inventor, could guess at how terrible that price might become. *Traitor To The Living*—a shattering novel of tomorrow.

DAW BOOKS comes on strong this month with a stack of SF sagas never before in paperback form. *Galaxy Of The Lost* introduces a new series featuring Cap Kennedy, secret agent of the spaceways—the first of a series of commissioned originals written by Greg Kern, a pseudonym for a well-known SF novelist. Diplomat-at-large, scientific troubleshooter and CIA agent, Kennedy could be to the SF novel what James Bond is to the secret agent genre. In this and future exploits,



Kennedy and his three companions from neighboring planets investigate possible upsets between Earth and other worlds in the universe on their mission to keep peace among aliens and humans throughout the starways. Top-rate space adventure.

Gordon Dickson scores again for DAW with a new, far-out concept. The only hope for mankind's survival after the contamination of the Earth lay in *The Pritcher Mass,* a psychic forcefield construction out beyond the orbit of Pluto. Created by the efforts of individuals with extraordinary para-normal powers, the Mass was designed to search the universe for a new habitable planet. Chaz Sant knew he had the kind of special ability to contribute effectively to the building of the Mass, but somehow the qualifying tests were stacked against him. Then he learned that he had become the special target of an insidious organization that fattened on the fears of the last cities of the world. His confrontation with this organization, their real motives and his unexpected reactions, were to touch off the final showdown for mankind's last enterprise. A wild, way-out premise—Dickson lets his imagination cover all the possibilities.

An Andre Norton book is always news—and this one, *The Crystal Gryphon* is decidedly one of Norton's finest. Taking place in the same alien world as the bestselling Witch World Novels, it is the story of Kerovan, half-human, half-something-else, who sought his rightful heritage to the throne of Ulm at a time when strange sea invaders were shattering the old kingdoms and equally enigmatic manifestations of the Old Ones were coming again to interfere with humanity. Equals any of its predecessors in suspense, irony, and shock—a must for Norton read-

ers.

Another DAW SF thriller will be found in Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Hunters of the Red Moon.*

Other DAW releases include *The Hero of Downways* by Michael Coney, *Those Who Can: A Science Fiction Reader* edited by Robin Scott Wilson, *From This Day Forward* by John Brunner, and *One-Eye* by Stuart Gordon.

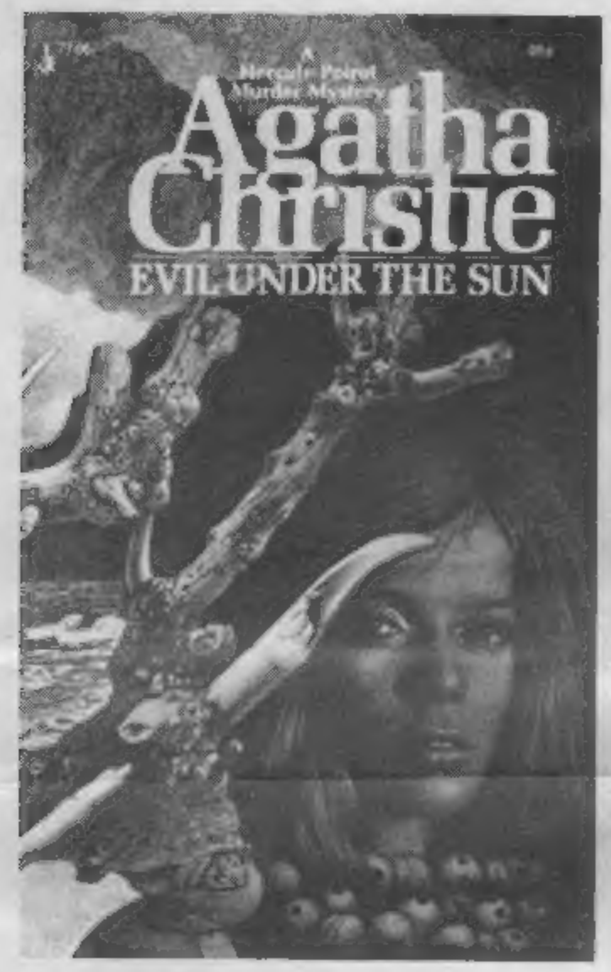
New ACE releases this month feature A. E. Van Vort's *Future Glitter,* ERB's *Carson of Venus, Plague Ship* by Andre Norton, *Worlds of the Imperium* by Keith Laumer, *Conehead* by Gardner Fox, and two new Perry Rhodan novels, *Realm of the Tri-Planets* and *Challenge of the Unknown.*

For those of our readers who prefer the longer-lasting hardbound editions of their favorite books, may we recommend the *Science Fiction Book Club.* SF buffs can now get the best of today's top-sellers in handsome, hardbound volumes by subscribing to the club's membership. Each month, two new selections are offered at a fraction of their original bookstore cost—usually only $1.49. For more data on the club and full details of their special introductory offer, write to: Science Fiction Book Club/Garden City, NY/11530.

CRIME

David Morrell's novel *First Blood* is a curious mixture of fast-action and psychological horror as the true victims of war are seen in a new light.

Rambo is an ex-Green Beret, ex-POW, Viet Nam veteran for whom the trials of war have become a way of life and a means by which he can test his mettle as a man. Wandering into the town of Madison, Kentucky, he runs into a bull-headed Chief of Police named Will Teasle and a personal, private conflict envelopes both of them during an extended man-hunt in which the finely-honed man-killing tactics of the Green Beret are pitted against the combined might of the police and National Guard. An emotional, claustrophobic reaction on the part of both Rambo and Teasle will not let either of them rest until one of them is dead. Rambo,



because he must prove to the policeman that he is the better man, and Teasle because he must prove to himself that *he* is the better. Both are caught in a vortex of psychological conflict that lead to the final, inevitable meeting, but not before Rambo succeeds in destroying the life, emotions and beliefs of Teasle.

As the suspense and violence of the novel builds, the parallels between Rambo and Teasle become more and more apparent. Both are bent on the others destruction, both are veterans who never fully adjusted to the peace that they fought for, both are savagely fighting to deny the truth that they have become, and in the end, both sense, on a remote level of consciousness, that they will do their best to kill one another because they must destroy that part of themselves that they see in the other. It is this singlemindedness of purpose that grips the reader and draws him into the story as the two characters resolutely attack, destroy, kill, and torture both themselves and each other in their self-destructive quest.

Published by FAWCETT, *First Blood* is a thriller that will keep you awake long past bed-time, engrossed in the crisply told gladiatorial duel between the horrifying victims of two wars, caught up in a new war against themselves and each other.

FAWCETT does it again in the 17th Joe Gall "Contract" series release, *The Shankhill Road Contract.* This new adventure takes CIA agent Gall to Northern Ireland where he mixes with intrigue, assassination and death. More teeth-grinding action happens in *Operation Whiplash,* Dan Marlowe's latest Drake (the man with nobody's face) thriller. Still more Mafia manslaughter abounds in *The Death Brokers,* P. D. Ballard's novel about the son of a Mafia chief and his fight to stay among the living.

If you liked Don Smith's Mafia bestseller, *The Padrone,* you'll want to read his new non-stop suspense and terror novel for FAWCETT, *The Payoff.* "I've hit you three times, and I'll go on hitting you unless you pay me two million dollars. If you discuss this with the police or the FBI, you lose another plane . . . " When Bill Stanford, executive vice-president of Pan World Airways, got the ransom note, he knew it was for real. He also knew it was just the beginning of the Mafia's new sky-jack extortion game. Hard-Hitting writing.

If fast-paced action is your meat, take a look at the BELMONT-TOWER line-up this month. Jona-

than Craig's *Case of the Village Tramp* sets the pace. Sixth Precinct Homicide detectives Pete Selby and Stan Rayder had worked on some rough cases, but the murdered teenager in the chastity belt was a real shocker. The belt wasn't a joke item bought in a novelty shop. It was the genuine article, a medieval work of art inlaid with gold and equipped with a jeweled padlock. Her skin was like sunlit ivory and a diamond tiara sparkled in her red hair. She lay naked on the floor of the Greenwich Village apartment and she might have been asleep except for the small, bloodless hole underneath her left breast. Tense, tough, torrid!

Peter McCurtin picks up the action with *The Sundance Murders* for BT. Somewhere on the vast Navaho Reservation a war was set to break out that would plunge the whole Southwest into bloody chaos.

For sheer violence, BT's Marksman is the best around. In *Headhunter,* The Marksman barely has time to take a sunbath when he becomes involved in a man-made bloodbath. While vacationing in sunny Puerto Rico with his beautiful girl friend Terri, the local Mafia boss spots him and calls in hitmen to rid the world of the terrible Marksman. That was a mistake. Using guns, knives, grenades and bare fists, The Marksman sends 39 Island Mafioso to their fiery deaths. Tops in blazing action. The Marksman means business!

BT rounds out their crime line-up with a pair of sexational romps through murder and mayhem starring Cherry Delight in *Chuck You, Farley* and The Lady From L.U.S.T. in *Kiss My Assassin.* Check out Frank Gruber's good old-fashioned shoot-'em-up private-eye, tale, *Murder One.*

Mignon Eberhart's name on mysteries is like sterling on silver, and POPULAR LIBRARY continues to publish her novels—to date 51 in all with over 13,000,000 copies sold. *While the Patient Slept* and *Another*

Woman's House are scheduled for release this Fall.

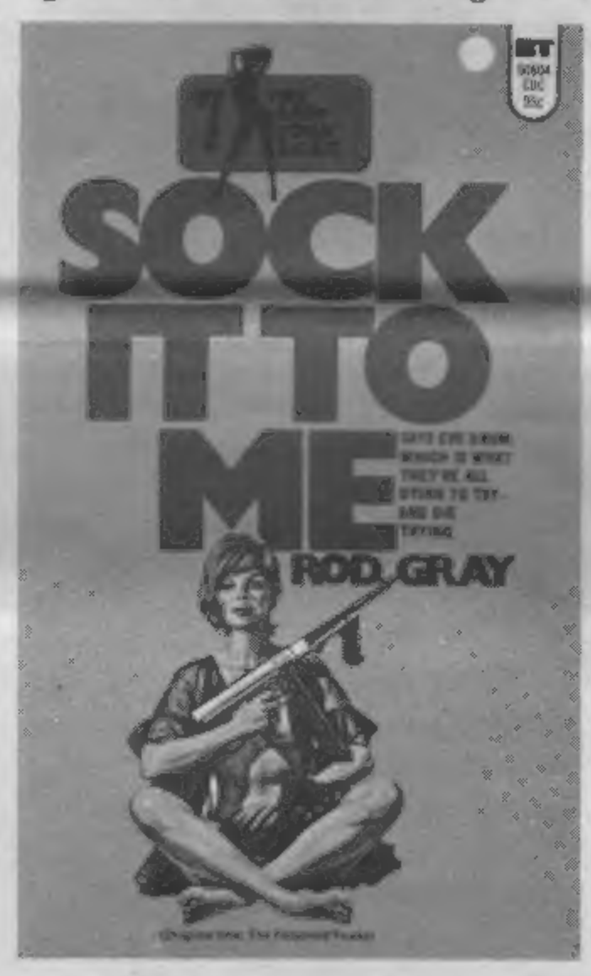
POCKET BOOKS bullseyes this month with a trio of crime thrillers beginning with Bill Pronzini's *Panic.* Jack Lennox had run away from everything—wife, job, home—and hadn't stopped until he came to a tiny desert town miles from anywhere. But he saw a murder take place—and the murderers saw him. So Lennox was on the run again, this time into the desert wilderness where temperatures soared above 150° in the parching sun. A beautiful woman tried to help him, only to become a murder target herself. Finally the two of them had run as far as they could go. They would have to stand their ground, to face the killers' guns with whatever weapon came to hand . . ! Soon to be a major motion picture.

PB does it again with *Box 100* by Frank Leonard. Box 100—that was the address for complaints about corruption in the city government. Ross Franklin was its newest investigator. His work consisted mostly of ferreting out petty chiselers in the toughest parts of town. The complaint about "lost" welfare checks looked like another penny-ante operation. But when Franklin investigated, he found himself up to his neck in a conspiracy of grand theft and murder! An upbeat, fast-action narrative!

Tension mounts unbearably in scene-after-scene in Jack Ehrlich's *Bloody Vengeance* for PB. They were tired, hard-working cops who'd had enough! And when the courts let loose a rotten punk to murder and steal again, they struck back. They not only nailed him, they unleashed a wave of vengeance that left no hoodlum unscathed. Nothing and no one was safe from their wrath —from the pushers on turf to the Mafia dons in the penthouse suites. And throughout the nation, their bloody movement grew . . ! A first-class thriller.

This month PB releases an armfull of Perry Mason classics (each with an eager pin-up girl on the cover), plus a new novel, *Case of the Fenced-in Woman.* Look for a trio of Agatha Christie releases including the Hercule Poirot mystery *Evil Under The Sun.*

This month BERKLEY BOOKS makes their bid for the crime/violence market with a smashing new series featuring The Lone Wolf. Burt Wulff was a New York cop once, in the narcotics division. But when his fiancee dies of an overdose, he throws his badge away, declares war against the international drug trade,



and sets out to kill pushers responsible for thousands of deaths all over America. His first stop is New York. Three original novels by Mike Barry will mark the series debut: *Night Stalker, Boston Avenger* and *Bay Prowler.*

Treat yourself to the Sept. issue of the *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine* if only to catch Rod Reed's delightful "Give Me Lib, or Give Me Death," where you'll meet Boston Blondie, Nora Woof, Simone Tempter, Hillary Quinn, Goldilock Homes, Samantha Shovel, May Gray and a score of others. You've never read anything quite like it!

While you're at it, might as well pick up the first issue of *Charlie Chan Mystery Magazine*—you'll enjoy the new exploits of the Oriental super sleuth.

Next month, *COMIXSCENE* exposes the complete dossier on Pinnacle's new series character, The Penetrator. Who says crime doesn't pay?

WESTERNS

The setting of the Old West seems to beckon every publisher to at least *try* to extend their efforts into the world of six-guns and horseback heroes, and Pinnacle Books, Inc. is no exception. Conforming to their policy of male-oriented fiction, Pinnacle has introduced the George G. Gilman series of western adventures concerning the exploits of a Civil War veteran named Edge.

Reading like Mickey Spillane westerns, the Edge books are swiftly-paced novels that lean heavily upon the fascination inherent in the male audience for violent action, sex, weaponry, dry humor and unending hardship spattered with blood. Plotting is always simple and straightforward, usually relying heavily on the theme of retribution.

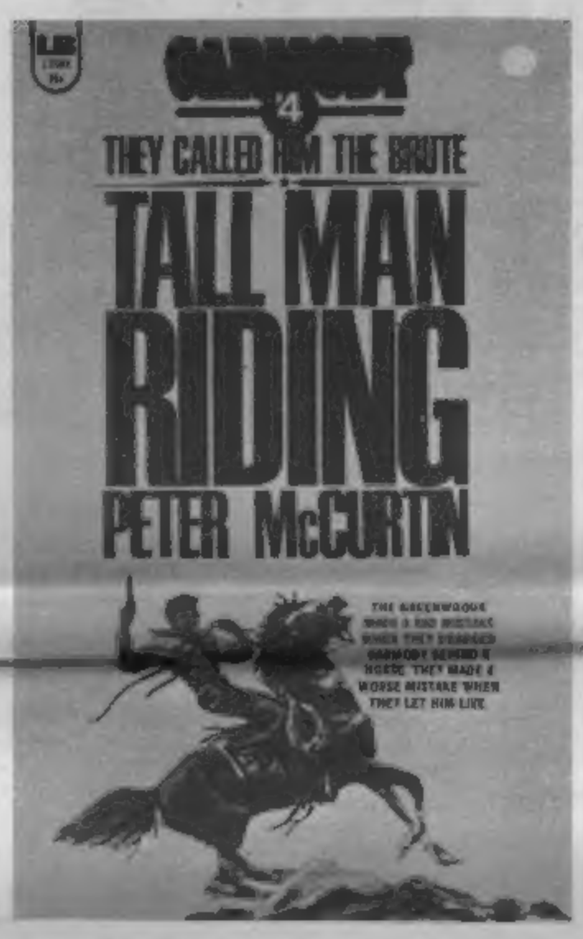
The seventh and latest in the series, titled *California Kill,* is fairly representative of the novels as a whole, concerning Edge's personal vendetta against a band of outlaws that robbed him of twenty-five hundred dollars. Edge gets his money back with interest for helping recover fifty-thousand dollars that was stolen at the same time he was robbed. In a rather unusual (for Edge) excursion into humor, the

author has populated this story with dozens of gags based upon the great Hollywood movie stars with characters named Randy Wayne, Duke Scott, Bronson, Stewart and Elam turning up as villains. Grauman's Chinese Restaurant, the Paramount and the Metro are business establishments in The Town With No Name.

Openly proclaiming to be not for the faint-hearted reader, the Edge series is nevertheless full of the excitement, action and violence that has recently become associated with the west, and more specifically in the cinema. One can only wonder why, given the obvious derivitive influence, the author did not use a band of outlaws called the "Wild Bunch."

More western violence this month with Leisure Books *The Ghost Dancers.* The lead character is what one has come to expect from the new trend. They called him Sundance—the big man with the hard face of a Cheyenne and a mane of yellow hair. Now he wanted to settle down, have peace, run a ranch. But times were hard and the Indians were starving. A man named Fain was selling the Sioux bad beef and a man named Wovoka was selling them a dream, a dream of Ghost Dancers and a final, miraculous victory over the white men. The Sioux were hungry and desparate enough to kill all whites—unless Sundance could stop the massacre. Action all the way through.

Another LB release, *Tall Man Riding,* features a relatively new western character. They call Carmody "The Brute." It's no lie. The Greenwood gang found that out when they relieved Carmody of the loot he had picked up in a quiet bank robbery. They made a fatal mistake when they let him live after they robbed him. Although they were a tough bunch of hombres, they were as good as dead when Carmody started after them. A violent, bloody novel of old-fashioned Western revenge by award-winning author,



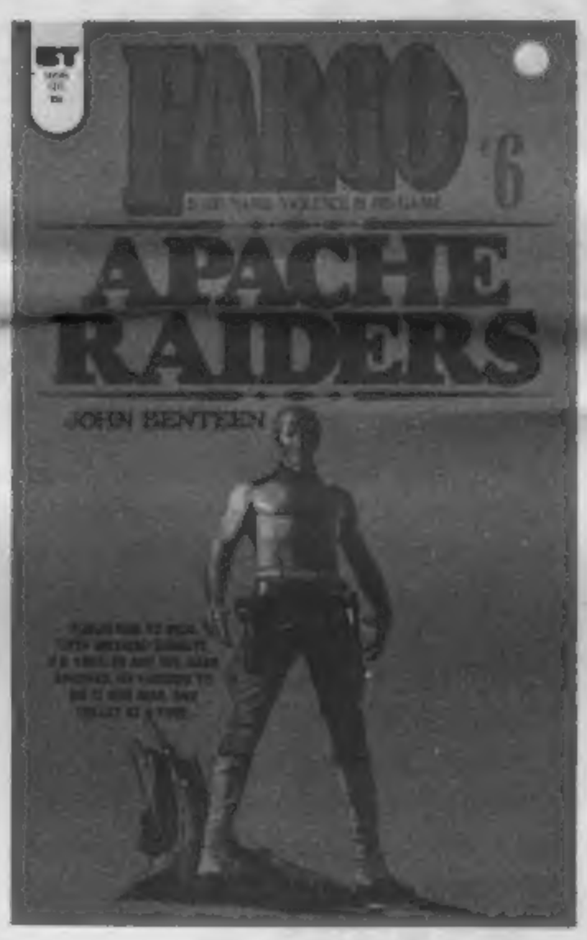
Peter McCurtin.

BELMONT-TOWER offers a quartet of western thrillers this month headed by *Apache Raiders.* The Mexicans needed guns and Fargo needed money—so they made a deal. Getting the arms past the cavalry patrols along the border would take some doing, but Fargo could handle it. There might be some problems with the sons of senoras but as always, Fargo figured to take it to one man, one bullet at a time. The Apaches turned out to be another breed of trouble. Geronimo was dead and the big Indian wars were over, but deep in the mountains the last of the Mescaleros still prowled like rabid wolves.

The Killing of Billy Jowett is another BT actioner by pulp noveleer Clay Randall. Amos Flagg was a good sheriff, tough as boot leather and mean as a spring bear, and the town figured he was due for some official recognition: Amos Flagg Day. But Ike Krug, the richest man in the Panhandle, didn't like to see anyone honored above himself. He set up a counter celebration—his own wedding, awash with champagne and whiskey. Then Billy Jowett decided he had to kill Krug who had stolen Billy's girl. To stop Billy, Krug hired a mean and willing gunslick and to stop Krug, the ranchers formed a vigilante committee. It was no time for a celebration. Flagg fans —don't miss this one!

BT scores again with the third of the Buffalo Hunter series, *Gunslammer.* O'Brien, The Buffalo Hunter, is basically a loner. But like many quiet men, O'Brien can be pushed only so far before he explodes in a fury of violence. That's the way it was at the Sulphur Creek gold strike. All the Buffalo Hunter wanted was to be left alone. The goldgrabbers made a mistake when they mistook his quiet nature for cowardice. When they pushed him to the wall, he decided to kill them all—one by one. Judge, jury and executioner, the Buffalo Hunter tracks the whole gang down and disposes of them with a kind of rough-and-ready frontier justice that seems fitting.

Another BT October book is Jack Slade's eleventh Lassiter novel. Lassiter is fast with his gun, fast with his fists, fast with beautiful women and fast off the rack. Like a magnet, he attracts all the trouble he can handle. In this latest release, Lassiter is headed up North to escape Wells Fargo's gang of bounty hunters. He figures he'll rest up for a spell, but danger *is* everywhere he travels. In *The Man From Cheyenne,* Lassiter finds all the things that make life



worth living—murder, robbery, rape, backstabbing and beautiful, but deadly, women. Gritty, Western action that holds the reader.

Western fans will enjoy BALLANTINE'S new John Hunter novel, *The Burning Land.* The problem was water—Cal Bentley had won his fight with the government to provide water for a land that desperately needed it. Now all he had to do was convince the local ranchers the government meant business. Even the sheriff had quit rather than try to tell Boss Herbert to get off the 500,000 acres of Government land he was using. So naturally Cal got himself elected lawman. Which ended up with him and his partner beaten and left in the desert, with no way to get back. No way at all. And no water . . ! Offbeat western tale.

Peter Field adds another Powder Valley Western to his credit for POCKET BOOKS with *Outlaw Express.* A big shot of trouble—that's what rancher Sam Sloan got for trusting a wandering cowpoke. In return for friendship, Kit Filer staged a payroll robbery and left Sam holding the bag, With a cunning sheriff in hot pursuit, Sam saddled up with his pals, Pat and Ezra. Together, they gave chase to Filer and his ruthless band of outlaws. And they stuck by their guns right down to the bullet-blasting finish. Field's companion release this month is titled *Powder Valley Plunder.* Twin western thunder.

Another PB release this month is Jack Ehrlich's range war novel, *Laramie River Crossing.* Grazing sheep destroy cattle land. So when the cattlemen heard that a fellow rancher was bringing in sheep, they lined up on the Laramie River to stop him. Preacher and the boys were hired guns. Their job was to get those sheep across the river, whatever the cost. But somebody pulled a doublecross and by the time they spotted it they were caught in a deadly crossfire. Hot lead action, .45 justice.

Two more western classics are on hand from PB. Zane Grey's memorable *Lone Star Ranger* is back in print, pitting fast-shooting Buck Duane against a pack of vicious outlaws in exchange for a Governor's pardon—at the risk of his life. Max Brand's *Valley of Vanishing Men* is another Silvertip novel of trigger-quick action in the usual Brand tradition.

Look for a pair of Award Books' "Dollar" series by former comic and pulp novelist Joe Millard. *A Coffin Full of Dollars* brings The Man With No Name in conflict with Shadrach and Apachito, the cruelest gun in the West. The second novel, *The Devil's Dollar Sign* features the man in the black frock coat with the oversized bible that conceals a gun, The Reverend. It's a race for the gold—and one of them will have to die.

ACE PAPERBACKS offers *Starlight and Gunflame,* a trio of gripping Western tales by Ernest Haycox and a double western by William Vance, *Avenger From Nowhere* and *Son of A Desperado.* In addition, Sam Bowie's *Chisum* (from the film of the same name) is on the newsstands this month. Read the book and watch John Wayne in the film version on NBC, Saturday, October 27th. Adios, til next time, amigo!

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